David's Repentance,

OR,

A plain and familiar

EXPOSITION

OF THE

LI. PSALM.

First Preached, and now Publiſhed for the benefit of God's Church.

Wherein every Chriſtian may ſet before his eyes the pattern of unfeigned Repentance.

Likewiſe exhorting every man to labour for Repentance before Sickneſs and Death ſeize upon them; for after Death there is no repentance to be had or expected.

The Fifth and Twentieth Edition.

Newly reviſed, and profitably amplified by the Author, *Samuel Smith*, late Preacher of the Word at *Prittlewel* in *Eſſex*.

Luke 13. 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.*

LONDON,

Printed by *J. R.* for *T. Paſſinger*, at the *Three Bibles* and *Star* on *London-Bridge* and *M. Wootton*, and *G. Conyers*, at the *Three Daggers* in *Fleet-ſtreet* near the *Temple-Gate*, and at the *Golden Ring* in *Little-Brittian*, 1694.

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TO THE CHRISITIAN READER.

CHriſtian Reader, ſeeing the burthen of the Miniſtry is, this, to pluck men out of the Kingdom of Satan, and to bring them to the living God; ſurely then it is the Duty of all thoſe that have taken upon them this holy Calling, to help forward this worthy work: And to this end I entertained my ſpare hours in the time of my long Sickneſs (when I was not able to perform my Duty in the Congrega-

tion of my charge) in publishing this short Exposition of the LI. Psalm *to the view of the World, not for Vain-glory, or for any good conceit or opinion that I have of the same, or of my self, as he knoweth that knoweth all things: But chiefly for the honour of God, that if it please the Lord to give a blessing to it, sinners, even such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of Death, might be moved to Repentance. It is an opinion of carnal Men, who remain under Satan and his Dominion, (as all men do by nature) that when sin is committed, done, and past, they shall never be called to account for the same. But (alas) no length of time can wear sin away, if it be not taken away by true and unfeigned Repentance; yea, the sins of our youth, which many years ago we have committed (if now in*

time,

time we do not repent and stop the mouth of the same) shall stand up as new and fresh against us as the first hour we committed them. O that we would be wise to think on these things! Our selves wax old, our bodies declining to the Grave, and will we take no pains to wash away our sins, but let them stand in their strength against us? This is a great folly. Let men therefore think of this betimes; there is no going to Heaven with dry eyes, or on beds of Down. *Now if this poor work of mine may find entertainment with thee, I shall so much the more be encouraged to take pains in this kind or other places of Scripture, as upon the first* Psalm, *which I have now published, with many other: And withal, may help thee forward to this necessary duty of Repentance. I have then my desire. Give the*

praise to him from whom all good cometh, who worketh in us the will and the deed; to whom be Praise and Honour for ever and ever, Amen.

Thine in the Lord

20 MA 59

SAMUEL SMITH.

THE

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20 MA 59

THE

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Psalm 51.

To him that excelleth, *A Psalm of David*, when the Prophet *Nathan* came unto him, after he had gone in unto *Bathsheba*.

1. *HAve mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy compassions put away mine iniquities.*

2. *Wash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins.*

3. *For I know mine iniquities and my sin is ever before me.*

4. *Against thee, against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: That thou mayest be just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.*

5. *Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

6. *Behold,*

6 *Behold thou loveſt truth in the inward affections : Therefore haſt thou taught me wiſdom ſecretly.*

7. *Purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean, waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than Snow.*

8. *Make me to hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.*

9. *Hide thy face from my ſins, and blot out all my iniquities.*

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.*

11. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy ſpirit from me.*

12. *Reſtore me to the joy of thy Salvation, and eſtabliſh me with thy free ſpirit.*

13. *Then ſhall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.*

14. *Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing joyfully of thy righteouſneſs.*

15. *Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Praiſe.*

16. *For*

16. *For thou deſireſt no ſacrifice; tho' I ſhould give it: Thou delighteſt not in burnt-offerings.*

17. *The ſacrifices of God are a contrite ſpirit: A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.*

18. *Be favourable unto Sion, for thy good pleaſure, build up the Walls of Jeruſalem.*

19. *Then ſhalt thou accept the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs, even the burnt-offering and oblation, Then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.*

20 MA 59

A

PLAIN and FAMILIAR

EXPOSITION

UPON

The LI Pſalm.

Firſt Preached, and now Publiſhed for the benefit of God's Church, *&c.*

PSALM LI.

The Text.

To him that excelleth. A Pſalm of David, *when the Prophet* Nathan *came unto him, after he had gone in unto* Bathſheba.

CConcerning the Book of the Pſalms, it is an Epitome of the whole Scriptures, teaching us what we are to believe, and do, both to God and Man. In which, as in all others, we may clearly behold the Nature of God, his wiſdom, goodneſs, and mercy towards his Church and his Children: as alſo moſt notable ſpectacles

of his fearful wrath and vengeance againſt the wicked and ungodly.

If men would pray unto God, and crave for any mercy and bleſſing at his hands, here be excellent platforms of true, hearty, and moſt earneſt prayers. If men would give thanks for any bleſſings received, for judgments eſcaped, or for deliverance from wicked and ungodly men, here be worthy examples and directions: If men would find comfort in temptations, troubles and afflictions, and learn with patience to bear them, there is no part of the Bible more ſweet and comfortable. And therefore it ſhould be our delight and ſtudy, and we ought to ſpend the more time in reading, and alſo in the meditation of ſo excellent and worthy a book, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 5. 29. *Search the Scriptures*: becauſe that will bring a man to true happineſs in the end, namely, to know God to be his Creator, to know Jeſus Chriſt to be his Deliverer, to know himſelf, and to direct him in that narrow path that ſhall lead unto life.

I thought good to ſpeak of this Pſalm, becauſe it containeth in it a moſt worthy example, of true and unfeigned repentance, without which there is not, nor can be any pardon of ſin: *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.*

Now it containeth a famous and moſt worthy example of repentance, if you either regard the perſon, who was renowned and eminet King of *Iſrael*, a Holy Prophet of God, yea, a man after Gods own heart.

Again, in the matter of the Pſalm, and of his repentance, you ſhall ſee a ſpectacle of

two

two great and grievous ſins committed by *David*, wherein we may alſo ſee the great frailty and weakneſs of God's Children by nature, which may teach us to pray unto the Lord for the Spirit of corroboration, for if *David* fell who was a holy man, whither ſhall we fall who are great ſinners, if God do but a little leave us to our ſelves? And howſoever by the ſpecial mercy of God towards *David*, this ſin of his prevailed not to his Eternal condemnation, yet we ſee what terror of conſcience and grief of heart he ſuſtained, before he could be aſſured of his former comfort. And this ſhall all fleſh find, that the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon here, will bring with them ſorrow in the end, a thouſand tears and ſighs for one ſin of pleaſure. As for the repentance of *David*, we ſhall ſee it moſt excellent and admirable, for he doth freely and truly confeſs his ſins and is not aſhamed to Chronicle them even in the Word of God, for all poſterity to read and peruſe. And laſtly, we ſhall ſee the endleſs love and mercy of God towards poor and miſerable ſinners, when they ſhall truly repent and ſeek for mercy.

Dividing of the Pſalm.

The whole Pſalm contains two parts: Firſt, the Preface of the Pſalm, ſhewing the occaſion of it And by whom it was penned; and Secondly, the Pſalm it ſelf, which contains in it nothing elſe but a moſt earneſt prayer of *David*, as a poor priſoner arraigned and condemned at the Bar of God. And the Petitions of the Pſalm are two-fold: Firſt, there be ſome concerning *David* himſelf, to the eighteenth verſe: And Secondly, ſome concerning the good of the whole Church in ge-

neral, because his sin had endangered not only his own estate, but even the good and flourishing estate of the whole Church of God, and his own Nation.

In the Preface or Title of this Psalm.

First, mark to whom this excellent Psalm was committed, *To him that excelleth*, or, *To the excellent Musician.*

Secondly, by whom it was penned, *A Psalm of* David.

Thirdly, the circumstance of time when it was penned, *When* Nathan *the Prophet came unto him.*

Then fourthly the occasion of it, namely, *Nathans* message from the Lord, sharply reproving *Davids* sins, namely, adultery and murther.

To him that excelleth, or to the excellent Musician.

First, to whom this Psalm was committed. 1 *Chr.* 15. 1 *Ch.* 9. 1.

The Prophet *David*, when he had written any Psalm for the comfort and benefit of the Church of God, was wont, as it seemeth, to commit them unto those men who were appointed Masters of the Musick, wherein they did sing in the Temple to God's glory, *Haman*, *Asaph*, *Corah*, *Jeduthun*, &c. And therefore *David* and *Solomon* were commanded of God to appoint some Companies of Musicians to sing unto God: these were the Masters of the Musick, to set the Tunes, and dispose them. You must understand now *David* was not the Author of all these Psalms, though they be called *Davids* Psalms, but some other Saints and holy men did pen some of them as well as he; but *David*, being a man after Gods own heart, did cause them to be gather-

gathered and collected, and called them his Pſalms.

From hence, that *David* did commit this Pſalm and the reſt to the Maſters of Muſick, to be ſung in the Churches of God to his glory, and eſpecially this 51 Pſalm, being one of the ſeven Penitential Pſalms or rather a Pſalm of Pſalms for comfort to an afflicted mind: therefore was this Pſalm, placed by the wiſeſt in the midſt of the other penitential Pſalms even as the Sun is placed in the midſt of the Firmament. Likewiſe we learn, that the ſinging of Pſalms in the Aſſemblies and Congregations of Gods people, is not only an antient cuſtom of the Church of God, but very lawful and commendable, uſed as we ſee here in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, and commended them to God. Now the Birds, which are but poor creatures in reſpect of man, ſhould ſtir us up to ſing Pſalms: as St. *Ambroſe* reports, it ſhould make a man to bluſh when he conſiders how the Nightingale and Lark every morning and evening ſing out their Notes to the glory of their Maker, and man ſo much to neglect his Maker, as not morning and Evening to ſing praiſes unto his Holy Name. It is Gods own command that we ſhould ſing, and therefore it is good. The Book of Pſalms is called the Song of Heaven, and the Key to Paradiſe, and when we ſing theſe *Pſalms*, we muſt do it with the duty of holineſs and obedience. *David* he was ſtiled the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael*; *O* ſaith he, *ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes to our God upon a ten ſtringed inſtrument.* In the Church Triumphant, there they ſing *Hallelujah* to

Doct. 1. *Singing Pſalms an antient practiſe.*

The Penitential Pſalms.
Pſal. 5.
Pſal. 32.
Pſal. 38.
Pſal. 51.
Pſal. 102.
Pſal. 130.
Pſal. 143.

the Almighty, and in the Church Militant we ſing, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts.* So it was the uſual practice of Chriſt and his Apoſtles to ſing Pſalms or Hymns after they
Acts 16. 15. had eaten, and it is ſaid of *Paul* and *Silas* that being in Priſon they ſung Pſalms at midnight in the ſtocks, even there they ſung Pſalms to God: the Virgin *Mary* ſhe ſung, *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord*; and ſo likewiſe of old *Simeon*, *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace*: ſo in *David*, I *will ſing a new ſong unto the Lord*, and in the days of the Apoſtles
Col. 3. 16. it was uſed, as *Paul* ſhews, commanding the *Coloſſians*, and all Chriſtians to uſe this holy
1 Cor. 14. Exerciſe: *Admoniſh your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, ſinging with a grace unto the Lord in your hearts.*

This then ſhould ſtir us up to the more careful practice of this godly duty, and it condemns the profaneneſs of thoſe ſcoffing wretches, who mock, as at all other duties of Gods people, their prayer, hearing, reading, exhorting, *&c.* ſo at their ſinging of Pſalms. Alas, theſe prophane men, and graceleſs wretches, having no grace in their hearts, they ſee not, nor perceive not the inward comfort which Gods children find in ſinging of Pſalms unto their God.

But ſome may ſay, I could never receive any ſuch ſpiritual joy in ſinging of Pſalms. It may be ſo, and thine eſtate is ſo much the more to be feared. As the prodigal ſon in the 15. of St. *Luke* did know it, and enjoy it, ſo the eldeſt Son asked what manner of joy it is? And ſo many worldlings ask *quale gaudium?* We anſwer, that which is known by taſte

taſte cannot by ſpeech, ſo taſte what joy it is, and then as Chriſt ſaid, *I have bread to eat, and ye know not of it*, ſo may the Chriſtian ſay, I have joy and ye know not of it.

But becauſe moſt men and women think it an excellent and comfortable practice, I will ſhew you how we ought to be qualified leſt we take more delight in the ſweetneſs of the Muſick, than in the comfort of the Pſalm, we do but make a noiſe, and are like ſounding braſs, loſing the benefit of ſinging, yea, take the holy name of God in vain.

How to ſing aright.

Firſt, then that we may ſing to Gods glory, and to our comfort, we muſt ſing with the heart and with the underſtanding: ſo Saint *Paul*, Col. 3. 16. ſaith, *I will pray and ſing with the ſpirit and underſtanding*, that is with knowledge and underſtanding of that I ſing; and not as the Papiſts uſe to roar in their Maſſes in Latin, ſo as none that hear them underſtand what is ſaid, or what is done, nay ſcarce themſelves.

Secondly, for the matter of our ſinging, it muſt be Pſalms or Hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs not vile and filthy ſongs which are the devils Muſick in the mouths of prophane perſons wherefore let us put away all vile and filthy Songs, and let us chear up our ſpirits, and make our ſelves merry with *Davids* Muſick. As the Spirit of God hath given him the name of the ſweet Singer, ſo let his Muſick be ſweet in our ears, let us often ſing this Pſalm, and other his mournful ſongs, that we may be filled with the joy of the Spirit as he was and paſs from hence into thoſe eternal joys, whither he is entred, that ſo

joyntly we may ſing *Hallelujah* together.

Thirdly, we muſt not ſing to ſpend the time, or to ſatisfie our ears with the noiſe or time; but ſinging we muſt ſeek to expreſs our thankfulneſs to God, to redeem the time, as St. *Auſtin* did, be not like the tinkling Cymbals, nor the Muſick of Children. And therefore we muſt ever labour our ſelves to be affected in ſinging with chearfulneſs unto God.

Fourthly, in ſinging, ſeeing it is a part of prayer, we muſt look to do it with all reverence as unto God himſelf; and as we would ſhew all ſeemly and decent behaviour when we thank our ſuperiour for a good turn, ſo ſhould we to God, and with more reverence. Theſe things being duly conſidered, ſinging it doth procure dignity and grace to the holy action, and much availeth to ſtir up the mind to true affection, and ferventneſs of prayer: but we muſt diligently beware that our ears be not more bent to the note, than our minds to the ſpiritual ſence of the words.

By whom it was penned.
1 *Sam.* 9. 14.
2 *Sam.* 13.

The ſecond point in the Title of the Pſalm, is the Pen-man of this Pſalm, howſoever it was indited by the Holy Ghoſt, who was the Author of it, yet you ſee it was penned by *David*, a worthy and renowned King of *Iſrael*, a holy Prophet of God, a man after Gods own heart, endued with excellent and ſingular gifts and graces of Gods holy Spirit.

Uſe 2.

Now from the Pen-man of this excellent Pſalm, who was ſo worthy a King and Prophet, and containing in it ſuch excellent and neceſſary matter, it ought to move us to the great liking & regard of this excellent Pſalm, for

for we will liſten to the ſpeeches of learne men: their counſels, and their exhortation being wiſe, grave, godly and learned, moſt affect us. Lo then, here is a Pſalm, pe ned by a moſt skilful Muſician, by a renown ed King, and worthy ſervant of God, Yea a man after Gods own heart. Now the perſo that wrote this Pſalm ſhould move us ver often to the liking of the matter contained i this Pſalm. *Ahab* ſaid of *Micaiah*, he neve propheſied good: So *David* the ſweet finge of *Iſrael*, always good: *The mercy of the Lor endureth for ever.* He was loved of God, th anointment ſpiritual and temporal doth veri fie it: Applauded of all, both men and women *David hath killed his ten thouſands*; A mar iuſtified of his enemies, *Thou art more righte ous than I*; eſteemed of his Subjects. *Thou art wo rth ten thouſand of us. A man more learned than his teachers.* He was a compound of virtues, a man after Gods own heart; yet no way deſiring the vain applauſe of men, con feſſeth here his ſin, caſting his Crown at the Lambs feet, with the twenty four Elders, contending to give glory to God, that ſo he might find peace on earth. O what an excelient thing were this, if Kings, Nobles and great men, would imitate *David* in this, to call themſelves to an account of their ſinful and youthful crimes, and to ſet down their lives, that ſo they might have matter to praiſe God for his bleſſings, and to acknowledge their ſins with *David*. *David* then was the Author and Writer of this Pſalm, yet *David* reports the fault in himſelf, as if ſome ſtranger had committed it: He forgets, as it were,

Pſal. 115. 100.

his own people, and his Fathers houſe, ſetting all affection aſide, maketh a plain declaration of his own tranſgreſſion. *A wiſe man* (ſaith *Solomon*) *will accuſe himſelf*, Prov. 18. So doth *David*, not ſhrowding his head, nor running into a buſh as *Adam* did, but writing his faults in his brow, and pointing with his finger at the Tranſgreſſor, under his own name ſaith, *A Pſalm of David, being reproved by Nathan, &c.*

Writers of the Scripture ſet forth firſt their own imperfections.

And indeed this doth make greatly for the Authority of the Word of God, in that the Writers of it do not ſtick to ſet forth their own frailties and imperfections, that God might have the honour, and man bear the deſerved blame: contrary unto the manner of the writers of this World, that howſoever againſt enemies they ſpeak all, and more than all, or extol their friends to the higheſt, yet in them we find few examples in laying open the errors of themſelves, eſpecially when in any ſort it may be concealed.

1 Sam. 1.

This courſe we may behold in the whole Scripture. *David* he recorded his Adultery, and Murther, as here in this Pſalm, his repentance of them:

Job 31. 1 Reg. 5. Num. 11. *Note.*

Jonah his diſobedience, *Job* his impatience; the Idolatry of *Solomon*; the diſcontentedneſs of *Moſes*; the fretting of *Jeremy*, and the like. Here we may ſee the wiſdom of the word of Life; here we may admire their Spirits, who, to give God the glory, do rejoyce in their infirmities, and proclaim their own follies. And if we would compare theſe Writers, inſpired with the holy Ghoſt, with the works and writings of other men, we

we muſt either ſhut our eyes, or elſe acknowledge a difference.

The third circumſtance is, the Time when this excellent Pſalm was penned, and that is expreſſed. *When Nathan the Prophet came unto him.* Concerning the ſenſe of theſe words, ſome men differ, ſome think, that *David* being fallen, lay in his ſins a whole year without any touch of Conſcience, and found repentance for them. But it is not like, as others think, that ſo worthy a man as *David* was, *after Gods own heart*, could lye ſo long in ſin without any remorſe and touch of conſcience. For my part, I take it, that though *David* could not be ſo ſtony and ſo ſteelly hearted, or benummed, but muſt needs have ſome griping and ſting of Conſcience, and no doubt his heart muſt needs ſmite him, unleſs he had been more forgetful than the vileſt ſinner. So, for all that he was not ſo humbled for his great and grievous ſin as he ought to have been; till ſuch time as *Nathan* the Lords Prophet came to rowſe him, by the alarum of Gods Judgment denounced againſt him; wherein we may ſee firſt, that the child of God may both fall foully, and lye in ſin a long time without repentance; And ſecondly that the Miniſtry of *Nathan* is needful to reclaim us, elſe we ſhall not only ſin, but lye and wallow in them. And indeed, not ſo much the falling into ſin, as the lying in ſin wounds the Conſcience, and procures Gods judgments. God did not leave *David* without armour for his wounded Conſcience when *Nathan* told him, *Thou art the man.* No, he gave him a heart to repent for his ſin, for ſin

The time when this Pſalm was penned.

2 Sam. 12.

ſin brings firſt repentance, and then repentance brings forgiveneſs. *David* preſently confeſſeth and ſaith. O Lord, I have done theſe ſecret ſins which none but thy All-ſeeing eye can diſcern: *David* thought when he enjoyed the ſweet water of content, and pleaſure, that all was well; he did not remember that his ſweet water muſt return to the ſalt Sea again; for his little pleaſure to have a World of ſorrow.

Hence we may gather, firſt of all, for our great comfort, that it is the Lords mercy ſometimes to let a man fall into ſin. For as we build a wall the higher, by caſting the foundation deeper: So the Lord by humbling his Children, often times raiſeth them up. As in a Tempeſtuous Wind, Trees ſhaken by the root, in calm do ſpread themſelves the more, ſo the child of God, having his root ſhaken, doth the more ſtrongly faſten himſelf in Chriſt Jeſus.

Doct. 2. *The child of God may fall after he is called* Gen. 37.

Note in *David*, a man after Gods own heart, that the true child of God, after he is truly and effectually called and ſanctified, may very dangerouſly fall, and ſin againſt God even as *David* himſelf did: ſo *Joſephs* brethren how did they conſpire againſt him, to ſell him? yea, to kill him? and lay a long time, yea, almoſt twenty years in that ſin before they were truly humbled for it. How foully did *Peter* fall though he did not lye long in ſin? for the Text ſaith, *as ſoon as he heard the cock crow, he remembred the word of his Maſter, ſo he went out, and wept bitterly:* And as the Judgment-hall was a place of ſinning, ſo it was a place of repenting; but he *went out*

Mat. 26. 70.

pre-

presently and wept bitterly. And as *Clemens Alexandrinus* doth testifie, he wept so sore, that he made dents and furrows in his cheeks, with the tears that did fall from his eyes, yea, his repentance was so great, that he leapt into a Sea of tears when he denyed Christ. St. *Peter* he wept for his sins bitterly; he wept, and mingled with his tears the gall of an holy and spiritual revenge and anger, for the sin he committed, and the good he had omitted. So likewise St. *Paul*, when he saw his sin of cruelty, blasphemy and persecution of the Church of God, what revenge did he take upon himself in watching, and praying, and fasting, and in labouring to build up the Church of God again, which he before had pulled down, even to the hazard of Life, both by Sea, and Land; by Thieves and Robbers, and divers other perils. Thus man for a little pelf runs himself into a world of dangers, and for a momentary pleasure, hazards his Soul to eternal perdition, by the uncleanness of his heart. Yea, as *Job* saith, *Job* 15. *What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman, that he should be just: Behold, he found no stedfastness in his Saints, &c.* And *Prov.* 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean?* All which testimonies of Scripture serve to confirm the truth of this Doctrine, that the best of Gods Saints in this Life, are oftentimes overtaken by the policy of Satan, and the frailty of their own flesh, to commit great and grievous sins. Yea, the dearest of Gods Children sometimes are asleep, *Matthew* 25. *The wise and foolish virgins both slept.* But yet here is the difference, the wise awakened,

weakned, arose out of their security, the foolish prolonged the time. O then, if Christ Jesus have looked upon us, as he did upon *Peter*, let us look upon our selves, if *Nathan* be come, let us sleep no more.

Use 1. Seeing that Gods Children may thus fall into sin, and lye in sin so long a-time; although no man may hereby be emboldened to sin with *David*, much less to lye in sin without repentance; Yet we find that such hath been our security, and exceeding carelesness, that God leaving us in his just judgment, we have sinned, and lain in sin a long time, a year or two, or ten; yet if we can repent, and truly turn to God, as *David* did, we need not to doubt but he will shew us mercy, as to *David*. *At what time soever.* The Lord limits no time, if men do repent truly; but if men shall defer their repentance in hope of this, that they may repent hereafter, then let them take heed least the Lord cast them off ere they beware, or else leave them to hardness of heart, and impenitency, like *Pharaoh*, like *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; or like *Herod*, or like *Ananias*, and *Sapphira*. And there is a great difference between this, when a man hath lain in sin and the time is past, and when a man commits sin, and defers, in hope of time to come.

Here we may see the difference between this life and the life to come. Here in this life the remnants of sin, as so many spots and stains in the flesh, remain even in those which are cleansed by the blood of Christ: But when as the faithful shall be glorified, they shall then be found unblameable, without spot or blemish.

miſh. If we ſhall now caſt our eyes even upon the beſt of Gods holy Servants, as *Noah*, who forgot himſelf, and drank too much Wine, *ſo that he was overcome by it.* *Abraham* had his infirmity, giving at firſt little or no credit to what the Lord had told him; that his Wife *Sarah* ſhould bear a Son. *Lot* had his weakneſs of nature alſo, *in committing inceſt with his Daughters.* *Joſeph* had his weakneſs alſo, for no ſooner is he become a Courtier, and in *Pharaohs* Court, but preſently he learns to ſwear, *by the life of* Pharaoh. *David* who is the occaſion and ſubject of our preſent Diſcourſe, had his failings, in killing *Uriah* with the ſword: Secondly, in taking *Uriahs* Wife to be his. *Peter*, he had his ſlips and infirmities, in denying his Lord and Maſter with oaths and curſes, ſo that he muſt have a ſilly creature, a Cock, to put him in mind of his error. *Paul*, he had his natural paſſion of revenge burning in him, in getting Letters to perſecute the Chriſtians at *Jeruſalem*, and he muſt have a voice from Heaven to convert him, but being converted, what a ſtout Souldier was he in fighting the Lords Battles? St. *Thomas* he had his fault of infidelity, though an Apoſtle, and would not believe till he had felt and ſeen the wounds of his Maſter Chriſt Jeſus, who confirmed and ſettled his faith, and then he could confeſs, and ſay, My Lord and my God. Old *Zacharias* the Prieſt had his infirmities as well as the reſt, for the Angel told him, that his Wife ſhould conceive a Son, which he doubted of, and ſaid, *whereby ſhall I know this?* He muſt have an Angel to confirm it to him. Thus we may eaſily ſee ſhame in glory,

Gen. 9. 2.
Gen. 17. 17.
Gen. 19. 33.
Gen. 42. 15.
2 Sam. 12. 9.
Mat. 26. 27.
Act. 9. 22.
Joh. 20. 27. 28.
Luke 1. 18.

glory, darkneſs in light, folly in wiſdom, infidelity in faith.

But when Chriſt ſhall appear, and we likewiſe participate with him in glory, we ſhall be made like unto him. Here we ceaſe not to provoke God by reaſon of our ſins, which continually we do fall into, which ſhould be unto us as bitter as gall or Wormwood: But when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put on immortality, and death ſhall be ſwallowed up into victory, then ſhall we ceaſe to ſin, and be as the bleſſed Angels in Heaven.

Uſe 3. *Repentance is not in mans power.*

We ſee that repentance is not in mans power, but it is the ſpecial gift of God: For if the Lord had not ſent *Nathan* to him, to awake his benummed conſcience, alas, he had run on ſtill in ſin, he had lain and rotted in his ſins, but the Lord ſends his ſervant *Nathan* to admoniſh him, and to awaken him. And ſo the people of God acknowledge in many places of the Scripture. *Convert thou us, O Lord and we ſhall be converted.* Again, *Inſtruct them with meekneſs, proving if God will at any time give them repentance, that they may be ſaved.* Jer. 21. 18. 2 Tim. 2. 25. Then, ſeeing repentance is not in mans power, but it is the ſpecial gift of God, neither could *David* turn of himſelf, though he turned from God of himſelf, What madneſs then is it for men and women to defer all till the laſt gaſp, ſaying if they may have but three hours before death they care for no more: as though they had repentance at command? But oh thou vain man, ſee *David*, he fell by his own will, but could not riſe by his own power: And art thou better than *David*?

No

No, no; unleſs the Lord give thee repentance, thou canſt never repent, Oh then ſeek at Gods hands, and repent while the Lord calls, and offers thee the means. For firſt, our perſons muſt be accepted, and then our prayers God will hear, as he did *Davids*; for *David* ſaid, *I have called upon thee in the time of trouble, and thou didſt hear me.*

Man ſins by nature but cannot riſe without grace.

Seeing that *David* repented not till he was awakened and rowſed up by *Nathan* the Lords Prophet and Miniſter, and thought himſelf ſafe, and that he had got Heaven, but he went towards Heaven even as *Pharaohs* Chariots did after the children of *Iſrael*, with heavy wheels, burthenſome: But when he had notice of his ſin, he then went light, and joyfully to meet his God, ſaying, *I have ſinned.*

Hence I gather, that the word of God preached, is the means both to beget Faith and Repentance, and to encreaſe and revive the ſame; for how had *David* gone on ſtill in ſin if *Nathan* had not humbled him by the word of God? It is able to break a ſtony heart, it is able to wound a heart of ſteel. For what heart can be more obſtinate, rebellious, ſtubborn, ſtony and ſteely, than was the heart of the cruel *Jews*? Yet by *Peters* Sermon they were pricked, and throughly wounded and humbled. *Is not the word of* Jehovah *like unto fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the ſtone,* It is able to break a ſtony heart, which is as hard as flint. *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of God, becauſe I know it is the power of God to Salvation to all them that believe.* It is compared to a ſharp two-edged ſword, *It is mighty in operation, and ſharper than a two-edged-Sword:*

Doct. 3. *The word preached, the means to beget faith and repentance.* Act. 2.37. Jer. 31. 29.

Rom. 1.16

Heb. 4. 12. Ep. 1.1,2.

Sword: It is able to give life to those that are dead in trespasses and sins.

So then we must acknowledge a perpetual necessity of the Word, to beget us, also to increase in us the graces of Faith and Sanctification, which without the use of the Word preached, are subject, if not to dying, yet to decreasing, if not to perishing, yet to diminishing. And from hence it is, that the Lord saith of his Vineyard, his Church, *Esay* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any assail it; I will keep it night and day.*

We see by dayly experience, that after our repentance, and the renewing of our minds, we are subject to stumble, and to fall into sin, and ready to lie long in it, as men cast into a deep and long sleep, if we be not waked with the Lords Trumpet, as we may see by this present example of *David*, who was by the subtilty of Satan surprized, and drawn to commit two horrible sins, Adultery and Murther, and lay a long space securely in them, until he was by the Prophet *Nathan* rowsed up and recovered, 2 *Sam.* 12.

Vse 1. Wherefore, as there is a continual use and necessity of repentance, so there is a continual use of the Preaching of the Word, that we should not stand at a stay, but increase more and more, till we come to the fullness of the perfect age of Christ Jesus.

This serves to commend unto us the power of the Word of God, which is both able to kill sinners, and to make them alive again, and puts a manifest difference between the word of man, and the word of God. All the wisdo

wiſdom, learning, eloquence, and wit of man is not able to ſave a ſoul, to convert a ſinner, only the Word of God can do it, even the plain and ſimple preaching of the Goſpel can do it; *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.* Though nothing be more contrary to our nature than the Word of God, yet it doth by Gods bleſſing convert us.

Gods word only converts. 2 Cor. 1. 15. Pſ. 19. 7. Rom. 2. 14.

Well then ſeeing *Nathan* is the meſſenger and the means that God uſes to reclaim *David*, thus ſleeping ſecurely in his ſin, whereas the Lord could have converted him without *Nathans* help: We ſee then, that thoſe men who do deſpiſe *Nathan*, and the Lords Prophets and Miniſters, muſt need dye in ſin, without any repentance, who cannot endure themſelves to be admoniſhed and reproved; even as a man having a long feſtered Sore, that is even rotted and putrified, he cannot abide the chirurgeon ſhould touch it, or lance it: Alas, it will be his bane in the end. So is thy Soul ſick, full of rottenneſs and corruption, and yet thou continueſt in ſin, and lyeſt therein, and wilt not ſuffer the Lords Chirurgeons? Thou canſt not endure *Nathan* to be ſo buſie with thy ſins, what will follow but utter ruine of thy ſoul, and the bane of it? A guilty Conſcience betrays it ſelf before it be examined, therefore God hath given man a Conſcience, and placed it within him, as an eternal remembrancer; which at one time or other breaks out, and cries guilty, when no man accuſes him. And therefore, let all men be content to have their heart ſearched with the tents of the Law, to be ript up, and lanced till the blood follow,

Uſe 2. Deſpiſers of the Word muſt needs periſh.

Note.

Doct. 4. *A fearful thing to live in sin without repentance.*

low, for this is the next way to be cured.

In *David*, observe what a fearful thing it is to lie in sin without repentance; it is that which maketh a grievous wound in the conscience, draweth down many and grievous judgments of God, as in *David*; he felt the smart of his sins a long time, yea, carryed the scars of it to his grave; it was a clog unto him all his life. *Peter* committed a grievous sin in denying his Lord and Master; yet he lying not in sin, repented presently, went out, and wept bitterly, and so had a pardon. But lying in sin, is that which wounds the conscience, and draws down Gods judgments both on soul and body, weakens our faith, makes us cold in prayer, and in holy duties. Yea, the wrath of God doth follow such as make no conscience of sin; giving them over to a reprobate sence, to a slumbering spirit, and to hardness of heart, that they prove in the end to be past feeling, *Rom.* 1. 28. And surely it is just with God, that he should forsake them by his grace, who have forsaken him by their sins. This is that which the Prophet declares concerning the secret judgment of God upon sinners, that do make shipwrack of Faith, and of a good conscience. *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. *My people would not hear my voice, and* Israel *would none of me: so I gave them up unto the hardness of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counsel.* Whence he shews, that seeing they would not be reclaimed and reformed, he suffered them to run their whole swinge unto all sin and wickedness. We must make haste from our sins, as *Lot* did from *Sodom*, lest we be consumed with

with them, as the *Sodomites* were; we must likewise make haste to repent, so as *Zacheus* did, who came down eagerly to entertain Christ. Sin is like a disease in the bones, it very hardly will be cured; for that which is bred in the bone, will hardly out of the flesh. Repentance is not so soon gotten as we imagine: It is dangerous to defer Repentance, for delays in many things bring danger with them. Some think it time enough to repent when the Bell is tolling them out of the world; we mistake it always, for sickness may so disable us, that we cannot be sensible of our own grief: That man that doth forget God when he is living, God will forget him when he is dead; for God prepared Heaven for the good, and the torments of Hell for the wicked. We must be like *Naaman* the *Syrian*, in making haste to *Elisha* the Prophet, so must we make haste to Christ who is our Saviour, if we will have forgiveness of our sins; if we will enjoy Heaven, we must climb Heaven by our Repentance: if we believe God will punish the wicked for their transgressions, why then do we provoke him to wrath, and cause him to punish us? It is long of our selves. If we will like *Esau*, spend our time in pleasure, and in hunting, we must then with *Esau* lose the blessing; but if we will hearken to our Wife *Rebecca*, which is the Church, she will shew us quickly how we shall get the blessing. Late Repentance is seldom true, though repentance may be never too late, if God shew mercy. Repentance cannot be good when it is deferred, and put off. We cannot have Repentance in a string or at our own wills; there-

therefore we muſt ſeek and labor for Repentance while we have time, ſtrength of body and ability of mind; for after this life is expired, there is no repentance but in Hell with ſorrow, and howling, and with gnaſhing of teeth. We muſt not, like the Papiſts, expect to have a Purgatory, and there to ſtay ſome certain time to repent, hoping ſome Pope or other to be preſent to ſeal us a pardon which is as much as if it were ſealed with butter: Being an Invention only to delude poor people of the true way to Salvation, and of their Money: They may as well look for a harveſt of Corn upon a Hedge of Thorns, as for a Pardon or forgiveneſs of ſins from them. For thoſe that truſt and ſeek to them for pardons, do as many men do, who go to a Lottery, and venture a ſume of money to get a prize, and then thinks he hath amongſt his Lots got ſomething; and when he openeth, he finds nothing but blank: Juſt ſo it is with their pardons, of no value, all blank.

Uſe. 1. Hence we learn, what a dangerous thing it is to give any entertainment to ſin; it is like to a bold and ſhameleſs gueſt, who, if he be once invited, will be hardy, that he will come again unbidden. It is like the breaking in of water, that can hardly be ſtopped. We may ſee this in the example of *Cain*, who was reproved of God, checked for his hatred againſt his Brother, and admoniſhed to repent, *Gen.* 4. 8. *But he hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord, but hardned his heart, and ſhed innocent blood, even the blood of his Brother.* This appeareth in *Judas*; he entertained covetouſneſs in his heart; from covetouſneſs

touſneſs he fell to plot with the *Phariſees*, from plotting, he proceeded to practiſing, and in the end he brake out to treaſon againſt his Lord and Maſter. Mat. 26. 15.

The like we may ſee of *Saul*, that as he fell away from God ſtep, by ſtep ſo did the Spirit of God, forſake him; For as amongſt all the bleſſings that God doth beſtow upon the ſons of men in this World, a ſoft and tender heart is one of the greateſt which is ſoon made bleed, brought to repentance and amendment of life. *Ezek.* 11. 19. So there can be no greater curſe laid upon man, than to have a ſtony heart (like unto *Pharaoh*) which every day doth heap up wrath againſt the day of wrath, *Exod.* 9.

Uſe 2. Continuance in ſin, moſt dangerous.

Well above all things let us beware how we lye and reſt in ſin. Indeed I confeſs the Lord might juſtly condemn us for the leaſt ſin we do commit; but yet he doth not ſo much miſlike us for ſinning, as for lying in ſin without repentance. When as we ſin, and lye in ſin, then we wound our conſcience then all grace will decay; let a man try himſelf. When *David* had done this evil in committing adultery, and murther, and lay without repentance, how was his Zeal quenched? how were his Prayers weakned? how was his heart cooled? how was his Conſcience wounded? Even ſo, do but try thy heart, if thou haſt committed ſome evil, either by adultery, murther, lying, ſtealing, *&c.* When thou haſt done this, how untoward and dull ſhalt thou be in holy duties, in Prayer, and praiſing of God? And thou ſhalt find even a very hell in thy Conſcience for the preſent, and

Note.

and have no power to perform thy duty in thy profeſſion.

Uſe 3. Seeing it is ſo dangerous to lye in ſin without Repentance, it is the very cut-throat of the ſoul, and of all good things: O then, if we do fall, as the beſt fall daily, yet let us preſently recover our ſelves earneſtly repent, and cry out with the prodigal child, *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and againſt thee.* And with *Peter*, let us haſtily go out, and weep bitterly, and then we ſhall not ſo deeply wound our Conſcience, nor draw down Gods judgmenst, as when we lye and ſnort in ſin ſecurely, without Repentance. I am perſwaded that many men will not go to bed, till they have ſummed up their Shop-book, to know what they have taken all the day, and what they have got: And ſhall not man do ſo with God, who is but Gods ſteward, caſt up our ſins, and reckon them to the full, what we have the ſame day before omitted and committed? O let us do it, leſt we be ſnatch'd away ſuddenly by Death, and ſo periſh everlaſtingly.

The occaſion wherefore this Pſalm was penned. The fourth circumſtance in the Title of the Pſalm is, the occaſion wherefore this worthy Pſalm was penned, which was this; *Nathans* reproving of *David* for going into *Bathſheba*; of which ſtory read the ſecond of *Samuel*, the eleventh and twelfth Chapters, and you ſhall ſee *Davids* ſin, and his Repentance, being reproved. Whence, I pray you, mark two things, *Davids* patience and *Nathans* boldneſs.

David was a mighty King, a famous Warriour; yet when the Lords Prophet comes unto

unto him, to reprove him, he takes it patiently, and moſt meekly endures it. One would have thought, that *David* ſhould have checked him and bid him hold his peace, and bid him meddle with his equals. But you ſee here, though he were reproved by *Nathan*, a poor Prophet of God, and that of a foul ſin, he moſt patiently endures it.

Hence we learn, in *Nathan* and *David*, that the Prophets of God muſt not be afraid to reprove the greateſt Perſonages; but they muſt lay open their ſins, and Gods judgments againſt them. *Elias* reproved *Ahab*, *Moſes*, *Pharaoh*, *Paul*, *Felix*, *John the Baptiſt*, *Herod*, *&c.* And ſo whoſoever thou art, if thou wert as great a King as *David*, if the Lord ſend his Prophet to tell thee of thy ſins, thou art to take it as the meſſage of the Lord and not to ſtorm againſt it. And this is the thing which the children of God deſire, to have their ſins laid open and reproved. *Let the righteous ſmite me friendly, and reprove me:* For ſuch ſmiting ſhall be good for me. And nothing is more dangerous for Kings, and great Perſonages, than to have their Paraſites and flatterers who will wink at their ſins. O, how had it been with *David*, if the Lord had not ſent *Nathan* to reprove him!

Doct. 5. Miniſters muſt reprove the greateſt perſonages. 1 Reg. 21 Mark. 6.

Pſ. 14. 15.

We learn hence, in what a woful eſtate and condition thoſe men and women are, that want a faithful Miniſter; They live in blindneſs and darkneſs, wanting the ordinary means of Life and Salvation: They have not the words of eternal Life. *Joh. 6. ver.* 8. which are the power of God to ſalvation, *Rom.* 1. 16. and therefore are near unto de-

ſtruction. It was a fearful word which Chriſt ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Mat.* 10. 5. *Go not ye into the way of the Gentiles, and into the Cities of the Samaritans ſee that ye enter not.*

And to the ſame purpoſe the Prophet *Amos* ſpeaking in his 8 Chap. 11, 12, 13. *Behold, the day is come (ſaith the Lord God) that I will ſend a famine into the Land, not a famine of Bread, and a thirſt of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, And they ſhall wander from Sea to Sea, from the North even unto the Eaſt, they ſhall run to and fro to ſeek the word of the Lord, but ſhall not find it.*

Oh that we would conſider of theſe things, and lay before our eyes what hunger it is to want the preaching of the word, that thereby we might learn to be thankful for Gods mercy towards us, to be moved to pity the deſolation of ſo many of our poor Brethren, as alſo to fear taking it away from our ſelves for our unthankfulneſs. Great are the Plagues, and horrible the ruins of the Church in many places. O that we had hearts to mourn for it, and we would pray the Lord of the harveſt to ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

Uſe 2. And ſurely this is a great plague and judgment commonly waiting upon great men, that they find few or none that dare admoniſh them of their faults, or tell them of their offences; and ſo many times are ſuffered to run on ſtill in ſin to their final deſtruction. And therefore, let us account it a ſpecial bleſſing ſent unto us of God, where we have ſome godly *Nathans*, by whom we may ſee what is amiſs in us. And *David* ſaith unto *Nathan*, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord.* Now the cauſe how

how *David* came to commit this ſin, was, by his idleneſs; for being upon the top of his Houſe or Turret, lying on his Couch, and not being employed in the Law of God, nor in the affairs of his Kingdom, then came the Devil, and ſet his heart, eyes and thoughts upon vanity, and ſo he committed this heinous ſin of Adultery, in ſetting open the eyes of his body to his own will and deſire. *David* muſt no more walk upon the top of his Palace, to view his ſtately City, unleſs he makes a covenant with his eyes, and ſhut and keep out thoſe temptations, which at the firſt led him to this error; and which objects are daily offered to our view: for the acts of ſin are only pleaſant for the time, and then they vaniſh away, being rather a burden to us than otherwiſe. The devil makes men commit ſin, by laying his baits of pleaſure in our way, making them ſweet to our thinking, when indeed they are bitter and full of thorns. *Nathan* tells him ſaying, *thou art the man.*

We can give ſuch a man thanks that will tell us of ſome ſpot in our faces, or blemiſh in our garments! and ſhall we envy or malign him that will diſcover unto us the ſpots and blemiſhes of our ſouls, which do more ſoil and defile us than all the blemiſhes of the body? and *David*, when he had now found the benefit of a godly reprehenſion, being reproved by *Nathan* the Lords Prophet ſaith, *Pſalm* 141. 1, 5. *Let the righteous ſmite me, for that is a benefit; let him reprove me, and it ſhall be a precious Oyl that ſhall not break mine head.* And to this end ſpeaks *Solomon*, *Prov.* 9. 7. *Rebuke not a ſcorner, leſt he hate thee,*

but rebuke a wiſe man, and he will love thee. The correction of a Friend is as the rod of a Father, the end is not to deſtroy, but to ſave; not to overthrow, but to deliver from death. God hath always his meſſengers in ſtore, to ſend out to his people, to have them repent. God ſent *Nathan* to *David*, God ſent *Jonas* to *Niniveh*, God ſent *John* the *Baptiſt* to the *Jews*; and the firſt word that he ſpake to them was, *Repent.*

This condemneth the ſpirit of pride in moſt men and women: For in theſe days it is come to paſs, that great Perſonages, if *Nathan* do tell them of their ſins, of their exceſſive ambition, idleneſs, vanities, uncleanneſs, and the like: Oh, theſe hot fellows are not for their humours, they cannot away with them; even as *Herod* in St. *Mark*, chap. 6. v. 20. Though otherwiſe he did reverence *John*, yet when he came to tell him of his inceſt and wicked life, then he muſt loſe his head for it. And as *Ahab* ſaid of *Micajah*, *I hate him, for he never propheſieth good unto me.* He is always threatning me, and telling me of my ſins, and Gods Judgments. So in theſe days, *Nathan* is the odious man of the world; men cannot brook this, to have *Nathan* ſo buſie as to meddle with their ſins; but men would fain be ſmoothed and daubed with untempered mortar. But if the Lord loves thee, he will ſend *Nathan* to thee to reprove thee of thy ſins, and if thou canſt not find thy heart willing to hear *Nathans* reproof, as *David* did, it is becauſe thy heart is naught, and it is a ſign that God will reject thee and deſtroy thee. *David* did not leſſen

or

or excuſe his ſins, but he preſently confeſſed them, and humbly begs pardon for his ſins. Hence we learn, how to eſteem of a faithful Miniſter, namely as the ſervant of God; which if it be, then *Moſes* muſt not be murmured at when he ſpeaks freely and roughly: And if *Micajah* reſolve of faithfulneſs, ſaying, 1 *King.* 22. *As the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith, be it good or evil, that will I ſpeak.* Why ſhould he be hated and be fed with the bread and water of affliction? Is it not a reaſonable plea and full of pacification in civil meſſage? I pray you be not angry with me, I am but a ſervant. Yea, *Jeremiah* the Prophet ſhall ſay, *Of a truth the Lord hath ſent me*, Jer. 26. 15. his feet ſhall nevertheleſs be faſtned in the ſtocks. Nay, this conſideration ſhould not only bind men to peace, from touching and doing the Lords Prophets harm, but alſo urge them to have them in exceeding honour, at leaſt for the works ſake, which is the Lords, who doth acknowledge them coworkers with himſelf 1 Cor. 3 9.

Laſt of all, this may ſerve to reprove thoſe that bear the office of *Nathan*, yet have the Word in reſpect of perſons, who dare not do their duties, but are afraid of mens faces: They would be accounted the Ambaſſadors of God, but they are afraid to do their Maſters meſſage. Let ſuch learn here of *Nathan*, who feared not the Majeſty of a King, but was faithful in his office. Let ſuch learn of *John* the *Baptiſt*, who did not ſhrink back, but was bold to tell *Herod* that it was not lawful for him to take his Brothers Wife. We muſt not be daſtards, and faint-hearted Souldiers,

to fight the Lords battle: but first be sure we have a good warrant out of the Word, and then go boldly into the field, and fear not to look the enemy in the face.

We are not our own messengers, to do our own Embassage, but the Embassadors of the eternal God, when he hath once put his Word in our mouths, we must go to those that he hath sent us. And whatsoever he commandeth us, that must we speak. *Jer.* 1. 7, 8. When God sent forth *Jeremy* to preach, he armed him thus; *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee*, saith the Lord. Thus he armed *Ezekiel*, Ezek. 3, 8, 9. *I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy fore-head hard against their foreheads: I have made thy fore-skin as the Adamant, and harder than flint, fear them, not therefore, neither be afraid of their looks, for they are a rebellious house.*

Doct. 6. Men must be charged with their special sins.

Then hence we learn, that the most effectual means to pierce and wound mens Consciences for sin, is to charge them with their special sins whereof they be guilty; not in general to reprove sin, but to rip up mens Consciences, to come to particulars, to tell men of their peculiar sins and impieties, as *Nathan* did to *David*, in the parable of the Sheep: *Thou art the man that hast done these things.* Even so the woman of *Samaria* did but dally with Christ, until he came to tell her of her special sins, namely, That she was a vile, lewd and wicked woman, no better than a whore or Harlot, and then she was tamed, and began to listen to Christs Doctrine. So here, *David* was asleep in sin, till

2 Sam. 1. Joh. 4. 9.

till *Nathan* came unto him, and told him, *Thou art the man that haſt committed adultery and murther.* And then began *David* to repent, and to beg pardon. So *Judas* could paſs ſentence upon *Thamar*, to be burned for adultery, but never thought that his ſin had been known, but when he ſaw the ſeal, the cloak, and the ſtaff, then he can ſay, *She is more righteous than I*; when he was thus brought to light, and his ſins laid in charge. Gen. 38.

This may admoniſh all Miniſters of the word, that if they deſire to convert men, and humble them for their faults, then to rip up mens conſciences, to ſmite them, to preſs them with their ſins, *Thou art the man.* For unleſs men be thus dealt withal, we ſee that ſelf-love will cauſe men to put off one to another: That is a good leſſon for ſuch a man, I would he had heard it, and ſo clear themſelves. For, as it was with *David*, *Judah*, and the woman of *Samaria*, till men ſee their particular ſins as Swearing, Lying, Whoredom, drunkenneſs, Ignorance, *&c.* they will not be humbled. *Uſe* 1. 2 Sam. 11 *Note.* Gen. 3.

If this be the ſureſt and ſafeſt way to humble men, to bring them unto true repentance for their ſins, then you muſt be content to have your ſelves thus dealt withal, to have *Nathan* tell thee, *Thou art the man*: That *John* ſhould tell thee of thy inceſt and uncleanneſs, and to ſtorm not againſt it, nor to kick againſt the word. For, this know, that if the word of God be not an edged ſword to kill ſin, and cut the throat of it, it will cut the throat of thy ſoul; it will not return in vain. O then, would you be ſaved by the *Uſe* 2.

word? then let the word pierce your hearts, and wound your souls. A man that is dangerous sick, will open his arm, uncover it, let the Chirurgeon let him blood upon a vein, thank him and pay him for his pains. Well, our souls be dangerously sick with sin, though we know it not; and we have many a deadly wound, though we feel it not: let us then lay them naked, and suffer the Lords Chyrurgeon with the sacrificing Knife of the word of God, to cut and launch them, if ever we look to be cured. Take heed you be not like unto *Ahab* or *Herod*, but rather acknowledge it the endless mercy of God, which sends some *Nathan* to reprove you, and smite you. Alas, men will not endure this to be said, *Thou art the man*, to be told plainly of their sins; but it is the only way to save mens souls. And the least repentance is a new life, and a strict course by circumspection for the time to come, desiring the Lord to forgive us our manifold sins; which manifold sins are great sins.

1 Reg. 22. 2. Mark. 6. Ps. 14. 3. 5.

And therefore, let us all, young and old rich and poor, noble and simple, be content to hear of our sins, and God's judgment against them: For, till that message be listened unto, there is no message from God of any pardon to be given, or mercy to be shewed, though it were to a King: Yet we see, *Nathan* being sent from the Lord, doth first his message of reproof, and heard that listned too before he utter any word of pardon. *Davids* attention to the words of *Nathan* open'd his ears; his intention, his heart, and his retention, his mind; as it did *Lydias* at the preaching of *Paul*. When

When *David* had gone in unto *Bathsheba*: That is, after *David* had commitcted that foul and filthy sin of Adultery with *Bathsheba.*

Whence observe the great wisdom of the Spirit of God, who speaking of a foul and filthy fact, uses a reverend and chast speech very honest and decent. And therefore we learn that as the Spirit of God speaks, so must we inure and acquaint our selves to speak. Yea, when we are to relate things that are not comely to be spoken, to moderate our speech, and to speak in an honest and a chast manner. So the holy Ghost exhotts us, that *our words should be gracious, and powdered with Salt, such as may minister grace to the hearers.* But as *for filthy communication, or foolish jesting, which is not comely, let it not be once named amongst you.*

Doct. 7. Chast speeches taught of God.

Col. 4. 6.

Eph. 4. 5.

And this may teach us, that we must all diligently study and practice the government of the tongue, to order it aright in the manner; which is a worthy study, according to that of the Prophet, *Psal.* 34. 12, 13. *What man is he that desires life: and loveth to see good days, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.* And to this purpose doth the Prophet *David* speak in another Psalm, *Psal.* 39. 1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue, I will keep my mouth bridled, while the wicked are in my sight.* The holy use of the tongue is the language of *Canaan, Esa.* 18. 19 which we must account to speak, that it may be ordered according to the will and word of God.

Vſe 3. This condemneth the common abuſe of mens Tongues, who do not only grievouſly blaſpheme the name of God in ſwearing, but in moſt vile and filthy barbarous ſpeech, ſuch as would make any chaſt ears to glow for ſhame, ſuch unclean and polluted words from young and old, even from little children and Infants, are ſo common, as muſt needs make a chaſt mind to bluſh at them. And how could they do this, but that they hear it of their Elders, Parents und others? I beſeech you remember *Pauls* words, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.* Eph. 4. 19. It is lamentable to hear that I have heard of your Children, moſt miſerable and curſed oaths, and filthy ſpeeches, even of thoſe (which is ſtrange) that can hardly ſpeak. I pray you for Gods ſake, look unto it; for if you ſuffer and give them liberty, they will be the cauſe of your woe in the end.

Doct. 8. The godly do reſpect more the glory of God, than their own credit.

Here mark that *David*, a glorious and renowned King of *Iſrael*, is content to ſhame himſelf for ever to have his ſins recorded to his own ſhame, ſo that he may procure Gods glory, and the good of his Church: For he was confident, that this example of his grievous fall being recorded in Gods Book, would turn by Gods bleſſing to the endleſs comfort and good of his Church. For, what a ſingular comfort is this to Gods children, when they ſhall remember, that the falls and ſlips of ſuch worthy men are recorded in Gods Book? And if this were not, our faith would fail, and we ſhould even utterly deſpair.

And as it was with *David*, ſo it is with all the godly, if ever they felt the terror of an-

an accuſing conſcience for ſin, if ever they were diſpleaſed at themſelves for offending a good and gracious God, they will not then ſtick to manifeſt their own ſhame, and proclaim their own folly with grief of heart, with the Leper in the Law. *Levit. Chap.* 13. *v.* 45. *I am unclean, I am unclean,* that ſo they may procure their former peace with God and give him glory by their repentance, as they diſhonoured him by their ſins: So that where the Lord doth awaken the conſcience, all excuſes are ſet aſide; a man is glad to diſburthen himſelf, by confeſſing his ſin unto the Lord Almighty.

We learn by *Davids* example, not to be unwilling to do that which may be for Gods glory, and the good of his Church, though it ſhall be our utter diſgrace in the world; yea, even to ſhame our ſelves for ever, ſo as God may have honour by us. Alaſs, we are ſo chary of our own credit, and ſo loath to ſhame our ſelves, that we will not acknowledge our ſins and infirmities, though it might turn much to Gods glory: But this let us know, that it is our duty to ſeek Gods glory and the good of his Church, though we ſhould even for ever ſhame our ſelves to the world. It is a ſhame to ſin, no ſhame to repent; yea ſhame is the beſt fruit of ſin: Neither is our ſhame increaſed by confeſſing our ſins, but rather diminiſhed, and taken away. And yet ſo nice are we, that we are loath to acknowledge our ſin, without which there is no pardon of ſin. Rom. 8.

Doct. 9. The ſtrongeſt may fall.

From the perſons that fell into this great ſin of Adultery, namely, *David*, and *Bathſheba*:

ba; *David*, an excellent King and Prophet of God, yea, a man after Gods own Heart: and *Bathsheba*, no ordinary person, but a
Prov. 31. woman of great name; yea, a religious woman, (as it appeareth) wise and discreet. By this we may see, into how great sins the children of God may fall, if the Lord leave them but a little to themselves; as we may behold in *Noah*, *Lot*, *Paul*, *Peter*, and the like.

Use 1. Seeing it is so, Oh how should we watch over our ways: Though thou beest the child of God, yet see how thou mayest fall, if the Lord leave thee but a while: Oh then *counter-guard thy heart, &c.* Keep it with watch
Prov. 4. 23. and ward, and look upon the casements of thy soul, thy ears and thy eyes; by them was
Note. *David* overcome. What Folly is it then in them who dare come into any company, that dare pry and look into the beauty of women, as though they were so strong, that they were out of all danger to sin? But art thou stronger then *David*? if not, thou maist fall.

Use. 2. Let all Ladies and godly women take heed let them look on *Bathsheba*, a worthy woman, and let them fear to give any entertainment of lust and uncleanness, for they may be sooner overtaken than they are aware of. Look unto thine eyes, and to thy company, lest thou be polluted by the society of unchast persons, yea, it may admonish all men and women, though never so confident, chast, religious, to fear themselves, and to cut off all occasions to uncleanness; as pride in apparel, self-conceit, evil company, idleness, and

and the like, which be foregoers of this ſin; yet none of theſe ſins go alone, but ſome other ſins do accompany them.

Laſt of all, let no unclean perſon; man or woman, make *David*'s nor *Bathſheba*'s ſins, a means to embolden them, or bolſter them in uncleanneſs; for, if thou ſin, becauſe ſuch ſinned, thou maiſt periſh in them, like *Pharaoh*, *Corah* and *Herod*. This is not the end why their Faults be noted in the book of God, for to uphold us in the like; but rather to admoniſh us of our weakneſs, to cauſe us to watch, and be wary leſt we fall, ſeeing ſuch excellent ones have fallen. *Uſe 3. Note.*

As *David* went from one degree of ſin to another, ſo God went from one degree of puniſhment to another. From ſins of weakneſs, *David* went to the ſin of malice; from the ſin of malice, to the ſin of preſumption. How induſtrious was *David* in ſtudying and diviſing to ſend away *Uriah* with a commiſſion, to haſten his own innocent death, the better to hide his adultery? And therefore, *David* poured out his penitential confeſſion, ſaying, *Againſt thee, againſt thee only have I ſinned*: Againſt thee only, for he was a King (ſaith St. *Ambroſe*) not bound unto Law; becauſe, ſaith he, Kings are free from the bond of crimes, and are not called unto puniſhment by any Law, being ſafe by the power of command; therefore *David* ſinned not againſt man, unto whom he was not obnoxious in regard of puniſhment, but of admonition only and reproof, uttered in the name and by the authority of God himſelf. Hereupon the Prophet *Nathan*, having uſed this preface, Apol. *David* c. 4. l. 2. Epiſt. 7.

preface, (Thus ſaith the Lord) admoniſhed King *David*, that he ſhould expiate his ſin by repentance; but he gave no ſentence againſt him, whereby according to the Law he might be adjudged unto death; For if *Nathan* had given any ſuch ſentence againſt *David*, he ſhould have had power to deprive him of his Life; and ſo of that which he enjoyed by his Life, his Regal authority, which God only can take away from Princes, becauſe he alone beſtows it upon them. Oh then, let us imitate *Davids* repentance, not his weakneſs. And ſo I come now to the Pſalm it ſelf.

Pſalm 51. Verſe 1.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindneſs: according to the multitude of thy compaſſions, put away mine iniquities.

NOw follows the Pſalm it ſelf, and it is a moſt excellent Pſalm to be learned of every Chriſtian man and woman, and oftimes to be uſed for our Comfort; for it contains a moſt earneſt prayer of *David*, that worthy ſervant of God, and renowned King of *Iſrael*, a Prophet of God, and a man after his own heart.

Wherein he humbly doth acknowledg his ſins unto the Lord, earneſtly entreating for grace and favour at Gods hands, for the true pardon of them all, and to be comforted again by the gracious promiſes of God.

This

This Psalm may be divided into two parts: in the first part, *David* prayeth for himself, unto the 18 Verse; in the second part, he prayeth for the Church of God, that the Lord would be favourable unto *Sion* his Church, and build up *Jerusalem.*

The main thing which *David* so earnestly, and so often prayeth for, is mercy, and favour at Gods hands, for the pardon of his sins, and this petition is repeated again and again joyned with great affection, and earnest desire of mercy, confessing his sins unfeignedly, and abhorring, them.

Secondly, *David* prayeth unto God for the work of Sanctification, that the Lord would purge him, and sanctifie him by his holy spirit, and renew his heart.

Thirdly, he promiseth to preach forth the mercy of God unto others; that his example shall be a means, by Gods blessing to convert them, to make them afraid of sin and to comfort them that be fallen.

Fourthly, he shewed the great abuse of outward Sacrifices, and the outward worship and service of God; that if it be done by impure and impenitent sinners, alas the Lord takes no pleasure in it, but hates and abhors it. Esa. 1. 11.

In the first verse we are to consider; First what is the thing *David* begs, namely, *mercy*: Secondly, the person of whom he begs it, and that is of God, *Have mercy upon me; O God*: Thirdly, the means and greatness of this mercy, *much mercy, and great mercy*, because of his great misery, and the doubling of this petition, shews, he Prayed with great

Zeal

Zeal and affection, (*Have mercy on me O God*) as if he ſhould have ſaid, O my God, I am a moſt vile and miſerable ſinner, I have committed very great and grievous ſins, I ſtand in great need of thy mercy: and therefore have mercy on me in the pardon of my ſins. Gods mercy is the girdle of Heaven, which binds and lets looſe all the Bleſſings which man enjoys on earth: His mercy endures for ever, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. Gods mercy is a ſpring which will never be dry, a fountain that will be always full; his mercy is over all his works. Mercy is a ſweet thing, it is the Worlds bond, which bears and holds it together, or elſe it would fall into a Chaos, or confuſion. To reckon up all Gods mercies would even fill ſuch a volume as this themſelves; as likewiſe his loving mercy, his forgiving mercy, his increaſing mercy, his hidden and compaſſionate mercy, his Fatherly and affectionate mercy. All theſe mercies of God he ſheweth to man, even while man is aſleep, and takes his reſt: For, Doth not God ſhew his loving, his increaſing, his tender and fatherly mercies, that while the Husbandman takes his natural repoſe, his Corn and other grain encreaſeth, and grows in the ground; and all this is ſtill Gods mercy and favour to man, to incite, and to invite him only to give him thanks and praiſe; nothing doth God elſe require of men, but only the heart: The firſt fruit of it, which is acknowledgment and confeſſion, that he is a God of power, and of mercy, and the Author of all goodneſs. *David* not only praiſeth God himſelf for his mercy, but he calls on others

to

to do the like. *O praiſe ye the Lord, for he is good: O all ye Saints praiſe his holy name, for his mercy endureth from one generation to another:* Firſt his mercy in creating us. Secondly his mercy in redeeming us. Thirdly, his mercy in ſanctifying us. Fourthly, his mercy in preſerving us from all dangers of body and ſoul, even to this preſent time.

Before a man can either crave for mercy and beg the pardon of his ſins, he muſt have the ſight of them, he muſt ſee the danger of them, and find himſelf to ſtand in extreme need of Gods mercy. *David* had lain a long time in his tranſgreſſion, and never ſought unto God for mercy: but being awaked by the reprehenſion of *Nathan*, now he cries for mercy and God did hear him; which, hearing of his requeſt in Heaven, was an act of mercy, in God: For *David* had the wings of Faith, which carried his petitions to God, and he did believe that God would forgive him; as thoſe that have faith in their prayers, their prayers ſhall never return without a bleſſing. The Prodigal Son a true pattern for all ſinners, he never ſeeks to his *Father*, till he was in extream miſery, and then he ſaith, *I will go to my Father.* So the proud Phariſee never begg'd for mercy, for he felt no want of it; and the Church of *Laodicea knew not that ſhe was miſerable, poor, blind; and naked.* For how can a man repent of that he is ignorant of? Sins committed cannot be repented of till men ſee them, and know them; nay, nor barely to know them, but to know the hainouſneſs of them, and the curſe of God due unto them; ſo as a man may

Doct. 1. Sight of ſin the firſt ſtep to Repentance.

Luk. 15.

Rev. 3. 10

may take it to heart, and be troubled for his sins. *David*, though a Prophet of the Lord, yea, a man after Gods own heart, yet lay a long time in sin without repentance, because he did not weigh and consider with himself what he had done, and therefore in the word of God, the Lord oftentimes calls upon men to consider their ways, to know their sins, and the curse of God due unto them. *Jer.* 3. 13. *Know thy sins, O Jerusalem.* Zep. 2. 1, 2. *Fan your selves.* Lam. 3. 40. *O let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord.*

Use 1. Here we may see the main cause, why there is little faith and true repentance in the World, why men are no more humbled for their sins, and do not repent of them; poor souls they know not that they do evil: They either cannot, or do not search themselves, Lam. 3. 40. They never call their hearts to account. Now then, going on in security, seeing and fearing no danger, alas, how should they repent? how should they turn to God? For, if thou couldest see the misery of thy soul, and thy woful estate by reason of sin; if thou couldest see the number and greatness of thy sins, Oh! thou wouldest even tremble for fear, and wonder at thy woful estate. But alas, most men are like a man that travels in the night over a narrow Bridge, which is very dangerous, and under it runneth a bottomless Gulph, so as if he fall, he cannot escape, but must needs perish; and therefore in the dark night, seeing not the danger, he feareth it not: But let him go that way in the morning, he will wonder

wonder that ever he was ſo mad and deſperate to go that way, and will never venture that way again. So, many poor blind ignorant Souls, when they have run headlong into ſin all their days, and paſſed their uncertain Life in ignorance, prophaneneſs and manifold ſins, poſting to hell and damnation, not ſeeing the curſe of God that doth hang over their heads, they fear nothing, but run on headlong into all ſin: But if it pleaſe the Lord to open their eyes to ſee their ſins, and the judgments of God due unto them: Oh! they do wonder at their own extream folly, and Gods infinite goodneſs and patience, and would not be in that caſe again for all the World.

Well then, mark this Doctrine, do not lightly paſs it over, but eſteem it as a bleſſed truth of God. Chriſt ſaith, *Luk.* 13. 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* And for a man to behold his ſins, the greatneſs and grievouſneſs of them, it is the firſt ſtep unto repentance. So that we ſee here, who they are that do repent, and ſhall be ſaved; even ſuch as ſee their ſins and their woful miſery, and the wretched eſtate wherein they are, and which do moſt earneſtly hunger and thirſt after mercy in Chriſt.

Well then, let me ask thee this queſtion, or rather demand thou it of thine own ſoul: Didſt thou ever ſee thy woful miſery, that wretched eſtate wherein thou art by reaſon of thy ſin? what a miſerable tranſgreſſor thou art by nature, out of the favour of God, in the eſtate of damnation, in extream danger for ever to be damned, and to loſe thine own

own ſoul? Didſt thou ever find thy ſelf to ſtand in need of Gods mercy for the pardon of thy ſins, and extream want of Chriſts blood to ſave thy ſoul? Haſt thou felt thy heart wounded and bruiſed for thy ſins, that thy ſoul is even ſick with ſin? Didſt thou ever thirſt after Gods mercy in Chriſt above all the world, ſo as thou haſt with ſighs and groans, yea, with tears begged Gods mercy on thy knees, as for life and death? *John 7. Chap.* If thou haſt not found and felt theſe things in thee in ſome meaſure; thy caſe is dangerous and fearful; thou didſt never yet truly repent; the mercy of God belongs not unto thee.

Now *David*, he repented preſently, at the very inſtant of time; he did not ſtand to argue the caſe; but he confeſſed his ſins, and upon his confeſſion, Gods mercy did grow and increaſe upon him, even as the Husbandmans Corn doth grow in the ground when he is aſleep: Such was Gods love and mercy to *David* upon his humility: And if we will not repent and go to Heaven by example, we muſt expect to go to Hell with company.

O then, it is a ſingular favour of God, when he does open a mans eyes to ſee his miſery, to find himſelf to ſtand in need of Gods mercy, and extream want of Chriſts blood to ſave his ſoul: This is the beginning of all grace, to feel the want of grace. *David*, if the Lord had not rowſed him out of his deadly ſin, wherein he lay a long time, he might have periſhed in it. And therefore, this ſhould teach us all to pray to God,

God, that he would in mercy open our eyes that we may see our sins, and feel our miseries, and that we may see we stand in extream need of Gods mercy. On the contrary, it is a fearful plague and judgment of God, for men to lie and snort in sin, without remorse of conscience, without the sense and feeling of sin, or want of mercy. This *David* now knew by woful experience, that if he had dyed without repentance, he had perished. Of all diseases, they be most dangerous, which be least felt, as the Lethargy, or dead Palsie, or the like. So it is a most fearful estate, for any man to lye in sin without the least feeling of it; for then the heart is hardned, and he makes no account of Gods mercy. A man that thinks he is well enough, will scorn the Physitian. So those blind sinners, that think they are well enough, and feel no want of mercy, of all men they are to be pitied; they be in a most dangerous state and condition: And therefore we see it is a great blessing of God, to be told of our sins, to be reproved for them, that so we seeing them, and the danger of them, we may seek to God for mercy. Gods mercy was great, saith, S. *Augustine* to the *Israelites*, who gave them a dry and a miraculous passage through the Red Sea, in heaping up waters like walls about them; and at the same time gave their enemies a watry Sepulcher, they were like the Sword-fish, who hath a weapon, but wanted a heart, they could do them no hurt; for Gods mercy did defend them, and protect them on all sides. Gods mercies

cies are manifold, for Gods mercies make a man bold to come unto him: His mercies they are of ſeveral kinds; every morning, as I have ſaid, God renews his mercies to man, his mercy whereby he prevents wrath when he is angry with us; then his meeting mercy to a repentant ſinner, and his forgiving mercy, and his loving mercy, in giving us life, food and raiment, Let us not pry too much into the mercies of God, but let us, as he renews his mercy every day, ſo let us renew our repentance every day, by faith and a new life every day, and every hour in the day.

Doct. 2. Sorrow for ſin a note of a godly man. 2 Cor. 7. 10. Mat. 26. Luke 18. 13.

Hence we learn, that the firſt ſtep to Heaven, and the beginning of true repentance, is this, for a man to be grieved for his ſins, to be wounded in Conſcience for them; for, till a man ſee his ſins, and feel the burden of them, and fear the curſe of God due unto them, he will never repent, and ſeek the pardon of them. This is that godly ſorrow that leadeth to Repentance, never to be left nor repented of.

Uſe 1. *Note.*

If this compunction and prick of the heart be the very beginning of true repentance, and the firſt ſtep to Heaven, and the ſalvation of a mans own ſoul; ſurely then moſt men be in a miſerable and wretched eſtate; for moſt men yet have not ſet forward one foot or gone one ſtep to Heaven: For they have never been humbled, never touched, never yet wounded, nor pricked in the heart for their ſins, and therefore muſt needs be in a dangerous eſtate. Well then, apply this to your ſelves; didſt thou never in all thy Life

Life find thy heart pricked for thy ſins, did the ſacrificing Knife of the Word never wound thy Conſcience, nor fetch one tear from thy eyes for thy ſin? didſt thou never find thy heart to mourn, and to be caſt down with remorſe of Conſcience? Certainly thy caſe is fearful and dangerous, thou art not yet gone one ſtep to Heaven, nor moved one finger to Eternal Life. No, no, thou art yet in thy ſins, in extream danger to be damned. Oh then, let the Word come home to you, harden not your hearts againſt it, never be at quiet till you can ſay, I have felt my ſoul touched and wounded with the word of God. Jam 2. 9.

This ſerveth for the comfort of Gods Children; for if we find and feel our hearts broken and wounded for ſin, ſo as we mourn for them with a godly ſorrow, becauſe they be ſins, diſpleaſe God, offend his Majeſty, it is a certain ſign we have truly repented, we are in the ſtate of grace, Gods Spirit hath met with us, the Word hath not been in vain in our hearts, but hath wounded ſin, cut the throat of it. Bleſſed be God, if thou canſt ſay by experience, that the Word hath been powerful to wound thy Soul, ſo as thy Conſcience is truly touched, not only becauſe of Gods anger, but becauſe of this, that we have ſinned againſt a merciful Father. This godly ſorrow ever goes with repentance; not as *Cain*, *Judas*, *&c.* who deſpaired of Gods mercy with a deſperate ſorrow, becauſe of the puniſhment; but when we are wounded with ſin, to mourn for it, becauſe it offend- *Uſe 2.*

offendeth God, a loving Father.

Doct. 3. The first thing *David* craveth is mercy.

From *David's* prayer and first petition, mark what it is he so earnestly craveth; not a kingdom, nor gold, nor silver, nor the life of his enemy, but *mercy*, *mercy* alone; he craveth for nothing but mercy. And therefore in his person we learn, what that is which we should most desire above all things in the world, namely, the favour and mercy of God in Christ Jesus; so that if it should be asked, what we should desire in all the World, we should answer, *mercy*, and the *favour* of God in Jesus Christ. He is a blessed man that hath mercy; let other men desire Worldly wealth, riches, honour, gold, silver; but Lord, I crave nothing but mercy, thy favour and loving countenance. The poor publican coming to God, he knocks on his breast, and cries for mercy; *God be merciful to me a sinner.* Luk. 18. 13.

For there is nothing in the whole world, that is able to appease the trouble of a wounded conscience, save only the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. *David* no doubt had tossed many thoughts within himself, when he came to utter this which is here mentioned; he had a true sight, no doubt of the misery and wretched estate wherein, he stood, by reason of his sin. And had there been any other way in the World to have gotten out of that estate, he would have found it. But mark he casts his eye only upon the mercy of God; making that his surest refuge in this his greatest necessity: Even so, howsoever the opinions of men

men, as touching happineſs, be diverſe, poor men thinking it riches, the priſoner liberty, the ſick man health; although theſe deſire all theſe, yet the ſinner never deſired mercy. This mercy of God, *David*, this ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael*, had oftentimes ſinned, now he deſires it. And this is the difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, *Honour me* (ſaith *Saul*) *before my people. Have mercy upon me* (ſaith *David.*)

Uſe 1.

We learn hence, that nothing can pacifie a wounded conſcience, grieved and diſtreſſed for ſin, but only the mercy and favour of God in Jeſus Chriſt. Men may in all their diſtreſſes go to ſports and paſs-time, and merry company. But alaſs, this is no comfort to a wounded Soul; only the mercy of God, and feeling of his love in Chriſt, can aſſwage and pacifie the accuſing of our conſciences. A man in a hot burning-Ague may taſte of cold water, which may eaſe him for the preſent; but alaſs, after it will increaſe his torment. And as an old ſore, if it be not healed at the bottom, though it ſeem to be ſound on the top, yet it will break out again, and become more dangerous and incurable. Even ſo, when men ſhall ſeek to ſmother the accuſation of conſcience to blunt the edge of it, it will after rebound again, and give a deadly wound to deſperation.

Nothing can pacifie a wounded conſcience but God.

Doſt thou find thy conſcience unquiet? Doſt thou feel it wound and accuſe thee, ſo that thou canſt find no comfort nor reſt unto thy Soul? There is no other way in the world to pacifie thy conſcience, and to

have peace, than to intreat and beg for mercy at Gods hands. *The Kingdom of God ſtands not in meat and drink, but in righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* So that although a wicked man enjoy all the World, yet if he have not mercy, and the pardon of his ſins, alas, he ſhall have no ſound peace of conſcience, no joy in his Soul, nor any drop of true comfort: And therefore, let us all ſeek reconciliation with God, intreat for favour and mercy, and never give any reſt unto our ſouls, till we can feel and find our ſelves aſſured of Gods mercy in Chriſt, and the pardon of our ſins. If any ſay, O that I could feel this in my ſoul, I have an accuſing conſcience. I feel it terrifie me, I am afraid I ſhall be condemned, I can find no comfort, what ſhall I do? Even as *David* here, beg hard, ſeek earneſtly, for ſo the Lord promiſeth: *If we ſeek, we ſhall find.* And therefore, let us pray, and continue in prayer, and know that the Lord will, in the end, hear and grant our requeſt.

Rom. 4. 14.

To whom he directs his prayer.

The ſecond point is, the party to whom the Prophet directs his prayer, and ſeeketh for comfort; not to any Bald-pate, nor to any Saint or Angel, nor to the Virgin *Mary*; but he goeth to God, prayeth to him, *Have mercy upon me, O God.* And he directs his prayer to the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; to God the Father, as the Author of all mercy; to Jeſus Chriſt, by whom, and in whoſe name, we obtain mercy; and to the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe he doth teach us to pray, and doth convey

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and derive all saving comfort to us.

Hence we learn, to whom we must direct all our prayers, namely to God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because we must pray to him alone, in whom we must believe. Secondly, God alone can and will pardon the sins of those that seek unto him for mercy. Thirdly, it is Gods Commandement, That we should pray to him, and to no other creature. Fourthly, we have promises, that if we pray unto him, he will hear us. Fifthly, we have the Examples of all Gods Children, who, in all their troubles sought to God alone, and to no other creature in the World, and so prevailed. How available were the prayers of *Abraham*, being made unto God in Faith, *Gen. Chap.* 18. That if ten righteous persons had been found in *Sodom*, God had spared those Cities for their sake? How was the Sun and Moon stayed at the prayers of *Joshua*, till he was reveng'd on his enemies? *Joh. Chap.* 10. How did *Elias*, by his prayer, obtain rain, which had been with-held from the earth three years and six months? 1 *Reg.* 17. *Jam.* 5. 17. *Acts* 12. 1, 2. *Job* 5. 14. *Dan.* 9. 17. *Joh.* 11. 41.

Doct. 4. *God alone is to be prayed to.* *Rom.* 10. 14. *Dan.* 6. *Psal.* 2. 7. *Levit.* 16. 31. *Esa.* 8. 19. *Esa.* 56. *Dan.* 9. 17.

This condemns the blasphemous Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who teach men to pray unto Saints and Angels, to the Virgin *Mary*, to stocks and stones, and I know not what; whereas the Lord saith plainly, *He will give his glory to no creature.* Now that we may not pray unto them, it is manifest: First, we have no commandment; secondly, no promise; thirdly, no examples of

Use 2. *Esa.* 41. 5. *Es.* 63. 10.

Gods Children; fourthly, we may not believe in them.

Nay, would we not take him to be a foolish Suppliant, that when the Kings Son offereth to speak for him to his Father, would refuse to use his Mediation, and go to one of his Servants to intreat for him? Is it not meet that such a one should be said nay? Even so, in as much as the Father sendeth us unto his Son, and the Son calleth us unto himself, what madness is it then to run as well from the one as to the other, to go from the Son to the Saints, from him that can help, to them that cannot help, depriving the Father of his honour, the Son of his Office, and disgracing the Saints? Away therefore with the mediation of Saints and Angels, who know not our hearts, nor hear our prayers. *There is one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* And 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. *This assurance have we in him, that asking any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* Let us tread in the steps of *David* and *Moses*, and the rest of the servants of God, whoever have in their greatest trouble called upon the name of the Lord. And howsoever Papists or Idolaters will be ready to pretend humility, and they will not be bold to come to God themselves, but they will use the mediation of such as are about him: Yet, let us know that *David* when he came to God, he was as humble as they, and far beyond them; yet his humility did no whit hinder his holy boldness, as to come into Gods presence. For our humility doth not appear in shrowd-

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ing our ſelves under the Saints wings, but by humble and hearty confeſſing of our ſins unto God.

Let us go unto God in prayer, intreat for mercy at his hands. Let us not go to Saints, or Angels; or any other creature ſave God alone in the name of Chriſt Jeſus: What Father is more ready and willing to hear his child, than the Lord is ready and near at hand to hear them that call upon him in truth? Now that we may pray unto God for mercy, and pardon of our ſins, we muſt be perſwaded of two things: Firſt, of the power of God, that he is able: Secondly, of his will, that he is willing to pardon them. The poor Leper ſaith, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* Mar. 1.4. And therefore, that we may pray in faith, and aſſurance, let us be perſwaded of theſe two things: Firſt, that God is Almighty, and is able to pardon all our ſins, though never ſo great. Secondly, that he is moſt ready and willing, for Chriſts ſake, (in whoſe name we come unto him) to pardon our ſins: For if we doubt of either of theſe, we cannot pray in faith, and ſo ſhall not obtain that we deſire.

Seeing *David* prayeth for pardon of ſin, and craves it only at Gods hands, we ſee that it is a curſed and blaſphemous Doctrine of the Papiſts, who hold, that their head, the Pope can pardon ſins; yea, not only give a man pardon, for his ſins paſt, but (far more) can pardon, and ſeal him a pardon of his ſins many years to come. A moſt blaſphemous Doctrine; and that which

Uſe 3.

The Pope cannot forgive ſins.

opens a gap to all ſin, when a man ſhall have promiſe of pardon for ſins to come. But we ſee here, that the word of God ſpeaks clear contrary, namely, that God alone can pardon ſins: *For who can forgive ſins ſave God only?* And where did we ever find, that God did pardon a mans ſin for time to come; but rather threatneth ſinners with judgment, to make them beware of ſin. So that we ſee that the Pope is Anti-Chriſt, who ſetteth himſelf in the ſeat of God, and exalts himſelf above God, in that he takes upon him that God never did, to give a man pardon for his ſins, before they be committed.

Luk. 5. 21.

2 Theſ. 2. 4.

After thy loving kindneſs, &c.

David being diſmayed, and caſt down in the ſenſe of his miſery, doth look up to God for mercy, and is emboldned thereby to draw nearer unto him, and with ſome comfort to call upon him for mercy.

Doct. 5. *Experience of former favour aſſureth of future favour.*

Whence we learn, firſt of all, this doctrine; that the experience of Almighty Gods former favour caſteth off fear, and cauſeth affiance in God, and is one of the chiefeſt cauſes to move us ſtill to truſt in him, as Pſ. 4. *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteouſneſs, for thou haſt ſet me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy therefore upon me, and hearken to my Prayer.* Where the Prophet reaſoneth for the time paſt, to the time to come, and intreateth God to hear him now, becauſe he had already ſhewed mercy on him. The like we may ſee, *Pſal.* 22. *Thou didſt draw me out of the Womb,* &c. Out of which words we gather

ther, that the Prophet for benefits paſt, aſſureth himſelf of deliverance from dangers preſent. The like of the Lion, and the bear, 1 *Sam.* 17. 4. *Pſ.* 34. 7.

We learn hence to acknowledge his great mercy; that maketh one mercy the ſeal of another, and one grace the pawn of another. Now, what man or woman hath not received thouſands and ten thouſands of mercies from the God of mercy? All which may be ſo many comforts unto his ſoul, to aſſure him, that God will never forſake him. Indeed, if our own works or righteouſneſs, were the only ground to move the Lord to take pitty on us, then we ſhould be much diſcouraged in our ſelves, when we look back unto our lives: But now the former mercies of God are arguments of further mercies, to aſſure us that he will add mercy to mercy: Whereby we may ſee how fruitful the loving kindneſs of the Lord is, always producing more, as one grain of Corn increaſeth an hundred fold.

Again, we learn hence a notable difference between God and man in beſtowing benefits; men are quickly weary of their liberality, but it is not ſo with God; the more bold we are in asking, the more bountiful he is in giving; which is a comfort to all weak Chriſtians, and wounded Souls, who are ever ready to reaſon thus within themſelves: Will God hear me, or reſpect me? Will he ſhew his loving kindneſs towards me a wretched ſinner? Yea, God doth hear thee, and reſpect thee, and will ſhew mercy unto thee, if thou ſeek unto him in faith; *Uſe* 2.

yea, the oftener we ask, the better we are accepted of God; the more we desire, the more we obtain. He chargeth us, *Psal.* 50. 15. *To call on him in the day of trouble*, and assureth us of our deliverance, *Jam*, 1.5,6.

Doct. 6. *The mercy of God emboldens sinners to come unto God.*

Hence mark what is that, whereby poor distressed souls, thrown down for sin, wounded and melting for sin, and almost in the gulph of Desperation (as *David* was) that gives them courage, and emboldens them to come into the presence of God, to stand before their Judge; namely this, the endless love and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, even the consideration of Gods mercy, that he is most ready to pardon and forgive poor sinners, to receive them to mercy; for so long as the conscience accuses for sin, and terrifies a poor sinner, he doth nothing but fly from God, runs from him, dares not look unto him, nor call upon him, till he conceive of Gods mercy in Christ, that he is most willing to pardon those which do truly repent.

Psal. 103. 8.

Now, that God is merciful, and ready to pardon poor sinners, and receive them to mercy, it doth appear by that his loving invitation, *Math. Chap.* 11. *ver.* 28. *Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will ease you.* Likewise he embraceth the poor and simple as lovingly and chearfully as the rich and wise of the World. Publicans and sinners are accepted of him, who were contemned of the *Jews*. The woman taken in Adultery, is exhorted by him to repentance. The blind man restored to his sight, and cast out of the Synagogue, is sought

ſought out by Chriſt, and taught to believe, *Joh* 9. 3. The penitent Thief is by him converted to the Faith, *Luk.* 23. according to that *Mat.* 18. 14. *It is not the will of God that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh.* The like we may ſay of *Mary Magdalene*, who was infamous in Life, out of whom Chriſt caſt ſeven Devils; of the *Canaanitiſh woman*, whom he heard and helped; of the Cripple that lay at the Pool, whom, when Jeſus found in the Temple, *Joh.* 5. he exhorted to ſin no more according to that of the Evangeliſt, *Matth.* 11. That by the power and love of Chriſt the Blind had their ſight reſtored, Lepers were cleanſed, the Dead were raiſed, the Lame walked, the Sick were healed, and the poor received the Goſpel.

Seeing a poor ſinner will never fly to God for mercy, until he be perſwaded of the favour and mercy of God in Chriſt, and can perſwade himſelf that God is moſt merciful and willing to pardon him; We muſt remember, ever with the one eye to look unto his Juſtice, that he is a holy and juſt God, moſt righteous, and one that cannot bear with ſin and ſinners, that live and delight in ſin: So with the other eye, we muſt look unto his endleſs mercy in Chriſt Jeſus. Fix our eyes upon that, and rely on that; otherwiſe alaſs, we ſhould be ſo far from ſeeking unto him, that we ſhall moſt willingly fly from his preſence, as a terrible and angry God, and moſt righteous Judge. And therefore, as we muſt needs behold him as a juſt God, and righteous to puniſh ſin, ſo

Eph. 3. 11. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1.

we muſt labour to be perſwaded of his mercy that he is moſt ready to pardon, full of compaſſion, that ſo by Jeſus Chriſt we may have acceſs unto the Throne of Grace, and enter with boldneſs into his preſence. And becauſe that Chriſt Jeſus is the *way*, the *truth*, and *Life*, let us never go without him in the arms of our faith, and in his Name beg for mercy; for without him we can find no mercy, but judgment.

Uſe 2. *Cauſe of mans deſpair.*

We ſee hence the very cauſe why ſo many come to deſpair, and ſo to caſt away their own ſouls; namely, becauſe they cannot conceive that God hath any mercy for them: They cannot be perſwaded of Gods endleſs mercy in Chriſt Jeſus; but when their conſciences do accuſe them of their ſins, they preſently ſee that God is angry with them, that he is a righteous Judge, an angry and terrible God againſt ſinners: And thus, ſeeing his juſtice and anger againſt ſin, they dare not appear in his preſence, but fly from him, as *Adam* did in the Garden, and could wiſh that they might never come into his preſence: They cannot for their lives behold the mercy of God in Chriſt. Impenitent ſinners cannot call God Father, they cannot endure Gods angry countenance, but rather wiſh they were out of the World, and might never come before his face: For this is certain, that, unleſs a poor ſinner, and diſtreſſed ſoul, can together with the ſence of ſin, and Gods anger againſt ſin, behold and acknowledge the endleſs mercy of God to pardon them, he never will dare to appear in his preſence, but Gods anger will over-

overwhelm him. Well then, let us with *David*, ſo behold and feel the anger of God for our ſins, to humble us, that we never deſpair of Gods mercy, but ſtill know and believe that God is no leſs infinitely merciful, if we can repent, to pardon and forgive us, than he is infinitely juſt to puniſh, if he will not repent.

Mark how *David*, a man after Gods own heart intreats the Lord to pardon his ſins for his mercies ſake: There from me learn, That there is no other cauſe to move the Lord to pity and pardon us our ſins; but only his moſt free and undeſerved mercy: There is no worth, nor goodneſs, or vertue in any man, to move the Lord to pity, and pardon us, but all this is of his meer bounty, goodneſs and mercy, without all merits of ours. As, what could the Lord ſee in *Saul*, *Rahab*, in *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom were caſt ſeven Devils, to move him to mercy; but his tender mercy alone? Even ſo, all gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, beſtowed upon his ſervants, either concerning this Life, or that which is to come: They all proceed from the free grace and mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 23. *Eternal life is the free gift of God.* This is confirmed by the practice of godly *Daniel*, Dan. 9. 8, 9. *O Lord, Righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us ſhame, becauſe we have ſinned againſt thee.* Whereby we gather, that though our prayers be not without effect, yet they prevail not with God by virtue of any excellency that is in them, but becauſe God

Doct. 7. *Gods mercy, mans merit.*

Act. 6. *Luke* 7.

God hath promiſed to be found of them that ſeek him in the means he hath appointed. And ſo for the reſt of Gods Ordinances, Word, Sacraments, *&c.* the Lord doth accept them, and is well pleaſed in them; howbeit, not through our worthineſs that perform them, but for his goodneſs ſake that doth command them. For theſe properties are to be found in works that are meritorious:

Firſt, they muſt be done by a mans own ſelf, and from himſelf; but we have nothing of our own to give unto God: *For what haſt thou, that thou haſt not received?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. without him we can do nothing: It is he that muſt work in us the will and the deed.

Secondly, they muſt be ſuch works as are not due unto him, they muſt not be due debt, but proceed from our own free will, even ſuch as God cannot juſtly challenge at our hands. But whatſoever we do, we do it of debt and duty; yea, Luk. 17. 10. *When we have done all things that are commanded us, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants, we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Thirdly, the works we do muſt be done for the profit of him from whom we look for a reward. But *Pſal.* 16. *All our godlineſs cannot reach unto the Lord.* We may benefit man, but we cannot benefit our Maker; therefore it is plain, we cannot merit.

Fourthly the work and the reward muſt be in proportion equal, for if the reward be more than the work, it is not a reward of deſert, but a gift of good will. But,

Rom.

Rom. 8. *The afflictions of this preſent time are not worthy of the glory that ſhall be ſhewed unto us.* So then they are not deſerved of us, but are beſtowed on us.

This condemns the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who teach that God doth ſhew mercy on ſome men, becauſe they be worthy of it for their good works, and honeſt life; and therefore they can diſpoſe themſelves by virtue of their free will, to move the Lord to have mercy upon them. But we aſcribe all to grace, and meer mercy; and therefore ſeeing pardon of ſins comes from the meer mercy and love of God in Chriſt, we muſt aſcribe all the praiſe of it to God alone, Pardon of ſins, grace to repent, life eternal; all theſe come from the meer mercy and love of God in Chriſt Jeſus. And therefore, let us aſcribe nothing to our own goodneſs, or virtue, to our own wit, or reaſon; but give all the glory and praiſe to God alone. Eph. 1.8.

According unto the multitude of thy compaſſions put away mine iniquities.

AS if *David* ſhould have ſaid, Oh, Lord, my ſins are many and great, and therefore I ſtand in need of thy mercy for my miſery, and of the multitude of thy compaſſion, for pardon of my offences.

When as *David* prayeth for the multitude of mercies, for the pardon of his ſins; We learn hence, what a hainous and horrible thing ſin is in Gods ſight, that it cannot be pardoned without a multitude of mercies. Sin being committed againſt an infinite God, deſerves infinite and endleſs puniſh- Doct. 8. *The nature of ſin.*

puniſhment of ſoul and body; and before it can be pardoned, muſt have infinite mercy.

Sin is odious in it ſelf, and maketh us vile and abominable in the ſight of God, *Jer.* 5. 25. *Iſa.* 52. 1, 23. *Keeping all good things from us, and pulling down all evil upon us, and that the wages thereof is death, being able to preſs us down even to the bottom of Hell.* It is ſin that makes us execrable to the Lord, and abominable in his ſight; yea, nothing doth more deform us, and make us curſed and deteſtable in the ſight of God, than ſin; the pardon whereof muſt have infinite mercy.

Then hence we learn, that we never eſteem rightly of ſin, till we come to be ſo grieved for it, as that we find our ſelves to ſtand in great need of Gods mercy for the pardon of it; yea, of a multitude of mercies, of a Sea of mercies; till we find, that we ſtand in need of every drop of Chriſts blood, to ſave our ſouls. *David* having ſinned, begs for a multitude of mercies; and ſo we ſhall find, that if we truly repent of ſin, that we ſtand in need of a Sea of mercy, and of every drop of Chriſts blood.

This condemneth moſt men and women, who are ſo far from eſteeming thus of ſin, that they make no bones of great ſins, and many grievous impieties; yea, they make a ſport of ſin, ſwearing, lying, drunkenneſs, whoredom, pride, covetouſneſs, *&c.* and give them names of virtue. We ſee it is too too common that men think they ſtand in no need of Gods mercy, they think, the *Lord have*

mercy

mercy upon me will ſerve. But if we will judge of ſin as we ought, we ſhall find, that we ſtand in need of a Sea of mercy, in regard of the multitude of our ſins.

God a God of mercy. Pſ. 11.9.

We ſee that the Lord is full of mercy, full of pity and compaſſion, and his mercies are over all his works. And indeed, his mercies are great: Firſt, becauſe they come from an infinite God, to men who are infinitely evil and deſerve no mercy but judgment. Secondly, becauſe for time, they laſt for ever, and never have end. Thirdly, becauſe the mercy of God concerns Salvation, life Eternal, *&c.*

And this is that which the Lord himſelf proclaimeth from Heaven, *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord is ſtrong, merciful, ſlow to anger, and abundant in goodneſs, and truth; reſerving mercy for thouſands, and forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin.* Again, *Mich.* 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that takeſt away iniquity, and paſſeſt by tranſgreſſion? He retains not wrath for ever, becauſe mercy pleaſeth him; He will turn again, and have compaſſion upon us, he will ſubdue all our iniquities, and caſt all our ſins into the bottom of the Sea,* Iſa. 55. 9. Ez. 33. 11. Though our ſins be great yet great is the mercy of God in pardoning, *Rom.* 5. 20. *Where ſin doth abound, there grace doth ſuperabound.* Wherefore, let no ſin ſo diſmay us, as to caſt us down to deſpair: let this chear us that God is gracious.

Uſe 1.

Seeing the Lords mercy is a bottomleſs Sea, that cannot be drawn dry, *His compaſſions fail not.* Hence is matter of great comfort to all true penitent ſinners. For thy

Lam. 3.

ſins

ſins cannot be ſo many, and ſo great, but if thou haſt grace to repent, God is able and willing to pardon them all.

If thou ſay, Oh my ſins are great, grievous, Monſtrous, unſpeakable: Well the mercy of God is greater, as may appear in the pardon of *Lots* ſins, *Davids*, *Peters*, *Pauls*, *Rahabs*, *&c.* if thou canſt repent, and truly turn to God. If thou ſay, Oh! they are more than the ſtars in number, remember that Gods mercy is a bottomleſs Sea; he hath a multitude of compaſſions, and can pardon them though never ſo great and grievous. If thou ſay, Oh! I have lived a long time in them, twenty, thirty, forty years; look on Gods mercy ſhewed to *Mary Magdalene*, *Paul*, and others that had lived long in ſin; ſo that if a man have grace to repent, neither the greatneſs, nor the multitude, nor the continuance of his ſins, none of all theſe can hinder Gods mercy; but here is all, that men muſt repent; otherwiſe, if men do not repent, the leaſt ſin is damnable; and if men do repent, no ſin is ſo great, but it is pardonable.

Gen. 19. 2Sam. 12. Act. 9. Joſh. 2.

The mercies of God belong not to all.

Yet, notwithſtanding, men muſt take heed, that they take not occaſion to live in ſin, becauſe God is merciful; and theſe things are noted as a comfort for thoſe that ſigh and groan under the burthen of their ſins, to comfort them, and to keep them from deſpair; that if they be truly humbled for their ſins, there is yet with the Lord mercy in ſtore whereby they may be ſaved.

Uſe 1.

Seeing all Gods gifts come from him to us of grace and mercy, even becauſe he is full

full of mercy, and hath given a multitude of mercies for poor penitent ſinners that ſue to him for mercy; We learn, above all things in the World to deſire mercy, and the pardon of our ſins. This we ſee in the Prophet *David*, *My ſoul is ſore troubled, but Lord how long wilt thou delay? Return, O Lord, deliver my Soul, ſave me for thy mercies ſake.* This is alſo practiced by the Church. *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not.* Thus the godly, when they deſire any bleſſings, they crave it of favour: If they crave to have any judgment removed, they crave it of mercy, eſteeming his mercy above all the World, or ought elſe they can deſire: Therefore, above all things in the World, for the mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, uſe all good means to obtain it; imploy thy ſelf diligently to keep it, and continue it towards thee, that in thy Life it may be well with thee, and in Death it may not depart from thee.

Pſ. 6. 6. Pſ. 63. 3. Lam. 3.

Laſtly; where the Prophet *David* ſaith, *according to the multitude of thy compaſſions blot out mine offences*: Mark that, the word (*blot out*) is a Metaphor taken from writing Tables, when a man ſhall wipe out with a Spunge all that is written; or, from croſſing of Books of Record, Books of Debts, *&c.*

And it is all one, as if *David* ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, I have run very far upon thy ſcore, I have even filled thy Book, not with ſmall, but great ſums of debt; pay I am not able, no, not one farthing. Now Lord, I beſeech thee, therefore, deface, croſs, and blot

blot out altogether the debt of my ſins.

Doct. 10. *The Lord keeps a book of our ſins.*

Hence we learn, That all our ſins are recorded in the Lords Book: He keeps a Bill of account, all our very thoughts, words and deeds, are known unto him; he keeps them in mind and memory, and hath them written down: And unleſs we repent of them and they be blotted out with the blood of Chriſt, laid hold on by faith, the Lord will call them all to account at the day of Judgment: *The Books ſhall then be opened*, and every ſin, old, new, ſecret, open, againſt God and man, ſhall be brought to light, for they be recorded in Gods Book.

Rev. 20. 12.

Now by theſe books we may not underſtand material Books, in which men write down ſuch things as they would have remembred, for God cannot be ſaid to ſtand in need of any ſuch helps; but becauſe all things are as certain and manifeſt unto him, as if he had his Regiſter in Heaven to keep account thereof, *Pſal.* 139. 16. *Dan.* 7. 18. *Phil.* 4. 3.

So then we may ſee, that the Lord doth keep a note of all our ſins; and chalk them as it were upon a ſcore, untill payment come. It is not with God as it is with Princes, who are ignorant of Treaſons Plotted againſt them, but all things, both paſt, preſent, and to come, are knowu to him, as well our rebellious thoughts, as ſinful acts committed And although we do forget, and careleſly mind what we have done, yet God forgets nothing, every part and Parcel of our debt being noted exactly in his Book of remembrance.

Seeing

Seeing all our ſins be known to God, he notes them down in his Book of account, and not one ſin can paſs him, but he writes it down; How ſhould this make us all careful as to our lives, that we commit no ſin? For if we do, the Lord knows it, and notes it in his book, and unleſs he blot them out, they ſhall all come to account.

A wicked man, and an unchaſt woman, how many thouſand vile and filthy thoughts have they in their minds night and day? Their hearts burn in luſt and uncleanneſs, and theſe they paſs over, regarding them not, making little or no account of them; but alas, the Lord hath them all written in the book of his remembrance; and if thou repent not of them, and leave them, Oh woe to thy ſoul, when this Book comes to be opened, and read over, and when thou ſhalt receive *according to thy works. Job* ſaith *Thou haſt ſealed up our ſins in a bag.* To ſeal up a thing, doth note an exact kind of keeping it. So then, the bag and bundle of our ſins being ſealed up, and that by God himſelf, let us not imagine, that any one can drop out, but all ſhall come to judgment.

Uſe 2. Seeing all our ſins are as ſo many debts, ſet down in Gods book, and we muſt come to a reckoning one day; how ſhould we labour all the days of our life to have them blotted out, to have this Book cancelled and croſſed even by the fingers of God? For, indeed we may run on ſtill in Gods debt, and ſet on a pace upon his ſcore; but we cannot ſo faſt wipe them out again: Nay, we can never of our ſelves pay one farthing, or ſatisfie

tisfie the least of our debts we owe unto him. It is God that hath written down, that must freely forgive and cancel, as himself telleth us, *Isa.* 34. 25. *I, even I am he, saith the Lord, that putteth away thine iniquities.* Now that they may be blotted out, and this Book may be cancelled, we must

First, truly repent of them all, bewail them, be grieved for them, that by them we have grieved God.

How to have the Books cancelled.

Secondly, we must beg hard, even as for life and death, for pardon of them, as *David*, did here; again, and again, ask mercy. If a man should run into debt a thousand pounds and know not how to pay his Creditor, his best way were to seek and make friends unto him for to forgive it. We are debtors to God thousand thousand sins; pay we cannot. then let us confess the debt, intreat him to blot his book, and take that hand-writing, and bond of obligation against us, and nail it to Christs cross. And this is an excellent property of the child of God, that he desireth (after a sort) to come out of Gods debt. A true child of God, cannot abide to have any thing standing on Gods score, for he knows, *Heb.* 10. 31. *That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*: So long to defer, till God warn to his Bar. O then, seek betimes, and give the Lord no rest till the debt be pardoned.

Thirdly, that our sins may be clean blotted out, we must have faith in Christ Jesus, for nothing can blot out sins, but his blood alone; nothing in Heaven and Earth can satisfie Gods anger, wash away sin, blot out

our

our offences, but only the blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore let us labour continually, to be assured of it by faith, to sprinkle our sinful hearts with the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. 1 Joh. 1. 7. Rev. 1. 6.

Seeing the Prophet *David* doth acknowledge, that this debt was more then he was able to pay, and therefore disclaiming his own sufficiency appeals only to Gods mercy in Christ, for the pardon of the same. We learn the Doctrine of Merits, yea, and Supererogation now taught in the Church of *Rome*, is most false, and erroneous, teaching poor people to lean unto Mans satisfactions, which they must make unto God, either here or in Purgatory: Whereas, the Justice of God is infinite; and when we have done all we can here in this life, we are unprofitable servants. Nay, there is not that man in the whole World, that if God should lay aside his mercy, and deal in justice, were able to satisfie the wrath of God for the least debt that he doth owe unto God. And unless the Lord take pity on us, and forgive the debt, there remaineth nothing for us, but to live in prison, *Mat.* 28. 27. and that for ever. *Davids* eyes did gush out with tears, when he did see other men sin; and surely, my beloved, his eyes did shed a fountain of tears, when he had committed that act of folly with *Bathsheba*, he little thought or feared that he had committed adultery: This act of his was his boldness, and security at that time. When we lye on our sick beds, our conscience shall witness against us; nay, our pillows will testifie, that they are stuffed full of

Bonds

Bonds and Bills, our bolsters with Forfeitures and Mortgages, our beds full of baggs of Gold, gotten by extortion and usury; our curtains hang about us with nothing but Indentures and Adventures. And do we think, that a sum of money given to the poor, or to some charitable uses, when we die, will serve the turn to take away or lessen our sins; or that a few mourning gowns left in the Will, to be given to the needy, will hide these black deeds, or make our spotted and sinful souls white? No, it will not. If we would have our sins remitted, and go to Heaven, we must, First confess our faults. Secondly, repent us of our sins; and then, Thirdly, give satisfaction for the wrong we have done to those parties which we have injured: This is the way to go to Heaven, and best pleasing to God.

Take this example of *David*, when he was told by *Nathan* of a certain rich man which had taken away a poors mans Lamb which was all he had; and such a Lamb as he nourished in his own bosom, and brought up at his own Table: *David* hearing this said, *The man that hath done this shall surely restore four-fold.* This was *Davids* will, restauration to be made to the party wronged. The like of *Zacheus*: *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrong'd any man, I will restore fourfold.*

So it must be with that man, if ever he means to enjoy Heaven: First, to make his peace with God, then after be reconciled to his Brother; not in bare words only, but in real actions: And so by this means you will

will hide and cover a multitude of ſins. Strive thus with thy ſelf, and thou ſhalt thereby gain thee a quiet Conſcience, both towards thy God, and alſo towards man.

Pſalm 51. Verſe 2.

Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſins.

IN this verſe, the Prophet *David* proceeds with his former petition unto God for grace and favour, for pardon of his ſins; yet ſo, as he doth it more effectually, and more earneſtly, becauſe his ſoul was now exceedingly grieved, ſeeing his woful miſery that he was in, how foul and filthy he was, ſtained with ſin moſt hainouſly. And though ſome put difference between theſe two ſpeeches, and underſtand the former of the waſhing of Juſtification and pardon of ſins, not imputing them unto his charge: And the ſecond of the waſhing of Sanctification, and the curing of our ſins; yea, by little and little waſhing and purging them away, and more and more renewing of us in ſoul and body by the work of Sanctification. Yet, many think the words do both imply one thing, namely, to be throughly purged from the filth and ſtain of Original and natural ſin, and to be received again into the favour of God, by the means of Chriſt.

It may ſeem ſtrange what ſhould move *David* to confeſs his ſin, and to entreat for pardon in this manner. There was no Court of

of inquiſition concerning this fact; there was no Magiſtrate to examine him, nor Judge to condemn him, he being a King: Nay, no doubt the Devil might ſet ſome on work, which might back him, and ſeem to leſſen his fault. What then ſhould cauſe *David*, without any regard of his credit, to come forth in this manner, and thus publickly to confeſs his pollution, and to be ſo earneſt unto God with his *have mercy, blot out, waſh me, &c?* Surely it was his own Conſcience; and that extorted and wrung from him this confeſſion, and made him ſo earneſt unto God in prayer, ſaying, *O Lord, take from me thy ſcourge and plague.*

Doct. 1. *A wounded conſcience can find no reſt but only in Chriſt.*

From this prayer of *David*, repeating his requeſt to God ſo often: *Have mercy, blot out, waſh me, &c.* We learn, that a wounded conſcience, that is truly touched for ſin, can find no reſt or comfort, but only in the feeling of Gods mercy in Chriſt for the pardon of ſin. And therefore *David*, to ſhew how he was truly humbled and wounded for ſin, he never can content himſelf to pray and beg for mercy and pardon. For after a man ſees his ſins, and the filthineſs of them, and beholds the wrath of God againſt ſin, his conſcience ſtill accuſeth him, neither can he find any reſt, till he do feel the mercy of God in Chriſt for the pardon of them. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* Rom. 17. 14. Rom. 5. 1. Again, *The Kingdom of God ſtands not in meat and drink, but in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt:* That is, in the pardon of ſin, and feeling of Gods love; for ſin once known will never ceaſe to accuſe, until it be pardoned. And

And this is confirmed unto us by the example of *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. who having ſlain his own brother, and ſhed innocent blood, which eried in the ears of the Lord for vengeance: How did the Lord ſtrike him with an accuſing conſcience, that he feared the ſight of every creature, when he had once attained the ſight of his ſin? And whereas he thought to build him a City, to yeild him comfort and ſafety; even there did the juſtice of God overtake him, and he was driven from his enterprize. The like we may ſee in *Belſhazzar*, *Dan.* 5. 6. when there appeared fingers of a mans hand upon the wall, his thoughts were troubled, and his knees ſmote one againſt the other. According to that puniſhment the Lord foretold: *Levit.* 26. *I will ſend even a faintneſs into their hearts; and the ſound of a leaf ſhaken ſhall chaſe them: and they ſhall fly as from a Sword, though none purſue them.* So that if it were poſſible to eſcape all apprehenſion and accuſation in the World; yet a mans own Conſcience would arreſt, and condemn him, even hale him unto judgment.

Seeing this is the nature of ſin, that being known, it will never ceaſe to accuſe, & vex the conſcience of a poor ſinner, till it be pardon'd it ſhould provoke us all that feel the ſmart of ſin, never to give the Lord any reſt, until we have pardon granted, But, as *David* did here, pray again & again for mercy & favour, & reconciliation with God, & never leave the Lord till we obtain mercy & favour, & till we have got ſome comfortable perſwaſion of gods love in Chriſt for the pardon of our ſins; for till we do ſo we ſhall never have peace, nor quiet-

nes of Conscience; we shall never have sound comfort and joy in Gods Spirit, but ever anguish and dolour, sorrow, and heavinesse; yea, either we shall grow blockish, and senseles, or else in the end come to extream desperation. And therefore let us labour with the Lord, ply him with prayers and tears for pardon, and never let him have rest, till we get one drop of mercy for the pardon of our sins.

Vse 2. Here we are admonished not to flatter our selves in our sins, as though no body saw us; as it is the manner of wicked men to say, *Eccl.* 23. *Who seeth me? I am compassed about with darknes, the walls hide me, no body seeth me whom need I fear?* And indeed here is scarce one of a thousand that makes any conscience of sin, so that the world do not take notice of it to condemn him. But let us not deceive our selves; though we think our selves never so secret, committing Adultery under a Canopy, or in the dark, yet our own Consciences will reply; I see thee, and I will accuse thee; and then, what is man the better for having no body private to his sins, when he hath a conscience within him, which dogs him up and down in every corner, giving him no rest?

Vse 3. This shews the madnes of carnal men, when they feell the burthen of sin pressing them, and their consciences accusing them. What do they run to God, and seek him? No, no, they run to their sports and pastimes, to Cards, and Tables, to the Tavern and Ale-house, and merry company, and thus they think to put off the sense of sin, and

and to ſmother, and ſtop the mouth of their accuſing conſciences.

Mark the thing which thus grieved *David's* ſpirit, and vexed his mind; namely, his ſins and impieties, his filthy ſins, whereby he had grieved his good God, and loving Father. He did not ſo much fear puniſhment, as this, to offend his merciful and gracious God. Therefore let us, with *David*, look back upon our Idolatry, look back upon our Whoredom, and Drunkenneſs, and then we ſhall jump with God, and ſay, that we have had no hard meaſure, when we are puniſh'd by any affliction whatſoever ſhall happen in this Life. If the Lord had not ſent *Nathan* to *David*, to tell him how he had ſinned, what would have been become of him? For *David* was in ſecurity, and as it were, dead in ſins and treſpaſſes; but it were God's great mercy in calling him back. Puniſhment and affliction cannot come of it ſelf; it was *David's* ſin which cauſed threeſcore and ten thouſand to dye of the Plague. Can a ſtone fly in the air without the hand that flings it? Or can a ſtone be moved without help? No more can ſin be removed, or our conſcience quieted, without our confeſſion and repentance. Repentance muſt firſt be inward, and from the heart, in ſorrowing, weeping, and lamenting for what hath been done amiſs in thought, word, and deed; and labour to ſin no more. Repentance is better for the conſcience of man, than cloaths before his back; for repentance brings forgiveneſs of our ſins, which otherwiſe would confound us, it brings us comfort to our

Doct. 2. *Difference between the ſorrow of the godly and the wicked.*

consciences, which otherwise would be afflicted; and shall in the end partake of that joy which is unspeakable. Saint *Paul* said, and confessed it was not he, but it was sin that reigned in his mortal body, which kept him from repentance, and from the knowledge of Christ, so long as it did. And though sin dwell in us by nature, let us desire and pray to the Lord, that sin may not destroy us for our natural corruption: For as the soul is placed in the body, so is grace in the soul of every true repentant; and though we have mountains of sins, ready to destroy us; yet let them not make us despair, or hinder us from calling upon the Lord for mercy, whose mercy is over all his works. True it is, that the abundance of our sins, and the clog of our own corrupt affections, leads us out of the way which guides us to happiness. And though our misdeeds be works of darkness, yet there is the window of Gods grace to give us light, an insight of our sins, which we have committed. Therefore, O Lord, suffer *Grace* to dwell and inhabit in our bodies, while we live here in this life, that hereafter we may live with thee in glory for ever.

Rom. 7. 10.

Hence then, mark the difference of Gods children, and the wicked, in repentance; the child of God is sorry for sin, because it is sin, because it offends God, and displeaseth him, and not so much properly for the punishment; (yea, though there were none) yet he would fear to offend, and be grieved for sin, because it is sin, and it breaks Gods commandments. This we may behold in

David,

David, when he had committed thoſe great ſins of adultery and murder, and was reproved for them by *Nathan* the Lords Prophet, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. He confeſſeth with grief and anguiſh of heart, in this Pſalm, *ver.* 4. *I have ſinned againſt thee, even againſt thee.* All the Judgments which *Nathan* threatned againſt him from the Lord, did not ſo much wound him as this, that he had diſhonoured his God. And when he had numbered his people, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. his heart ſmote him, and he cried out *I have ſinned exceedingly in that I have done.* The peſtilence did not ſo much trouble him, as his pride againſt God. And the Apoſtle *Peter*, Mat. 26. 75. ſeeing how grievouſly he had ſinned, in denying his Maſter, *went out, and wept bitterly.* If there had been neither Heaven nor Hell, neither reward nor puniſhment, yet this unthankfulneſs of his towards ſo kind a Maſter, would have cauſed *Peter* to have ſorrowed ſo much as he did. And when this godly ſorrow is once wrought in mans heart, then he beginneth to repent, and never before; the like we may behold in *Abraham*, in *Job*, in *Joſeph*, &c. *Gen.* 18. 30. *Gen.* 39. 9.

But wicked men, they are grieved for ſin, not becauſe it is ſin, and the breach of Gods Law, but for fear of puniſhment. *Pharaoh* intreated *Moſes* to pray for him, that the judgment might be removed; but ſtill he loved his ſin. So *Saul* prayed *Samuel* to pray for him, and to honour him; but ſtill he would go on in his ſin. So *Judas* repented and ſorrowed for his ſin, becauſe he ſaw now he ſhould be condemned; and ſo

Exod. 10. 11.

1 Sam. 15.

Mat. 27 3.

for punishment he was grieved. *Simon Magus* prays *Peter* to pray for him, but how? *That none of the judgments threatned might fall upon him.*

Cain mourned exceedingly, and cryed out, saying, *Gen.* 4. *My sin is greater that can be forgiven me*: But it was not for his hypocrisie in God's service, nor for the cruel murthering of his own Brother, nor the shedding of innocent blood; but because of the punishment that God had inflicted upon him *Ahab* also humbled himself, and put on sackcloath, as though he had been very penitent: But *Elias* wrung it out from him, denouncing God's judgments against him, 1 *King.* 21. 27.

Use 1. *Only godly sorrow causes true repentance.*

Seeing this is the difference between the godly sorrow of the faithful, and the worldly sorrow of the wicked; one sorrows for sin, because it is sin; the other because of the punishment only: Let us hereby prove our sorrow. Art thou grieved for sin, because it is sin, because it offends God? And art thou no more grieved for sin, because it grieves a merciful God, than for fear of punishment? Yea, wouldst thou be grieved for sin, though there were no Hell, nor Devil to torment thee; only for this very reason, because it offends thy mercyful God? Then it is a certain token of thy true repentance, and godly sorrow. But if thou find thy heart only to be lumpish, and heavy, in regard of the punishment of sin, in regard of Hell and damnation, and if it were not for that, thou could'st be content to live and go on in sin; surely then it is but a carnal sorrow, it is not a godly

a godly ſorrow, that is only for fear of puniſhment. And this deceives many a man who thinks he repents, becauſe he is grieved for ſin, in regard of the puniſhment. But the viſeſt Atheiſt and reprobate in the world may be grieved for ſin, in regard of his puniſhment, as Hell fire, and condemnation; as *Judas* and *Cain*, was. *David* did not with *Cain* ſay his ſins they were greater than could be forgiven: Nor let any ſinner whatſoever, when he hath offended God in a high nature, by aggravating his ſin, deſpair with *Judas* to be both his own judge and executioner as he was. O let us never ſink under the weight of deſpair, but confeſs our ſins, and crave pardon for them at the hands of his Majeſty with tears and groans. For the child of God is grieved for ſin, beauſe it is ſin, and offends God, though there were no hell to puniſh.

David prays that the Lord would *waſh him*; therefore ſin defiles, and he was made foul and filthy by his ſin: And to waſh him much and to rinſe and bathe him, to ſhew that ſin had exceedingly defiled him, and ſtained him both in ſoul and body, and made him loathſome; and therefore he deſireth to be waſhed, and cleanſed and purged from the pollution of his ſin. *David* knew God, was able to forgive him his ſin; he did know that God was not like old *Iſaac*, which had but one bleſſing left, and no more; no he knew, he had ſtore of bleſſings and mercies for a relenting ſoul. One deep calleth upon another, ſaith *David*, the depth of my ſins for the depth of God's mercies.

Doct. 3 *Sin defiles a man.*

Sin defiles the whole man.

Hence we may learn, what a vile, filthy and miserable thing sin is in the sight of God; it stains a man's body, it stains a man's soul, it makes him more vile than the vilest creature that lives; no Toad is so vile and loathsome in the sight of man, as a sinner stained and defiled with sin, is in the sight of God, till he be cleansed and washed from them in the blood of Christ. The Leprosie was a wonderful Disease, it did infect the body, yea, the cloaths on a mans back; the walls of the house, and the very stones. But this Leprosie of sin doth more defile a man; it defiles the Soul and conscience; yea, even the very Heavens and Earth are stained with the contagion thereof, and are made (by reason of sin) subject to vanity and corruption, *Rom.* 8. 20. Oh then, see how a vile a thing sin is in the sight of God, that the infection thereof should seize upon the Creature, and make them that they dare not endure and abide the glorious presence of God their Creator.

Levit. 13.

Yea, the creature.

Use 2.

Seeing sin is so vile a thing, so filthy and unclean, so polluteth the soul and body, and makes us loathsome in the sight of God, so as no Carrion or Dunghil sends forth a filthier scent or stench than sin: O how should we loath and abhor, quake, and tremble at the committing of it? Oh, it is a wonder to see how wary men are to shun the Plague; they will not come near the place nor person infected, but keep aloof off. Oh, that we would be as wise and careful to shun this plague of all plagues, sin; that is the plague of soul and body!

But

But alas, poor blind ſouls, they, who are moſt afraid of the bodily plague and infection, fear not this woful plague of ſin, make no bones of horrible and grievous ſins, of adultery, drunkenneſs, lying, ſtealing, &c. yea, as *Solomon* ſaith, fooliſh men, and poor ignorant Souls, do make a ſport of ſin, and put on them the name of virtue: ſwearing is a ſign of a brave Gentleman-like-mind: Drunkenneſs, goodfellowſhip, covetouſneſs, good husbandry; fornication, a trick of youth, pride, cleanlineſs: This is it which maketh our Land to mourn. Theſe men be clean contrary to *David*; he thought nothing more vile, filthy, and unclean, than ſin, they judge nothing more ſweet, and pleaſant than ſin. But if we could ſee the loathſome filthineſs of ſin, how odious it is in the ſight of God, how it ſtains and defiles both ſoul and body, then we ſhould hate it, and loath it more then a Toad or Serpent, and ſhun it above all things in the world: But alas, men ſin, and yet ſee not, that they do ſin; they ſee and feel no danger, they are ſecure. No man ſaith, *Alas, what have they done?*

Wicked men add ſin unto ſin, and pay one debt with another.

If any man ſhould ſay to any of us, Touch not that Garment, it is infected; or, Taſte not that drink, it is poyſoned: How ready would we be to ſhun it and avoid it? We would not touch, nor come near it. But yet, though we tell men of ſin, bid them take heed of it, it will infect ſoul and body, and unleſs men do preſently repent, it will bring both to Hell: Yet men, even mad-men, deſperately ruſh into it, willfully caſting away their own ſouls.

We be wary to avoid temporal danger.

Doct. 4. *Hard matter to be cleansed from the pollution of sin.*

Further, whereas *David* prays to be washed yea, to be washed throughly, and much and often: and more than that, to be cleansed and rinsed from his sins; for a deluge of sin must needs have a deluge of punishment; and therefore, *David* desired to be washed, and cleansed in the blood of Christ, by a lively faith, and a repentant heart. *David*, he desireth that God would wash and purge him from his sin: And if *David*, shall not we desire to be washed and purged, who are, and have been greater sinners than ever *David* was? We learn hence, that it is not so easie a matter for a man to repent, and to get the pardon of his sins, to be washed and cleansed from them, as most men think it is. *David* desireth the Lord to wash, yea, to wash him often, again, and again, and to bathe, and rinse him from his sins; shewing, that it is a hard thing to have the spots of sin to be washed out, a hard thing to obtain the pardon of our sin, to be cleansed from the stains and blemishes of them: It will cost much sorrow, many a tear, many a sigh and groan even a great measure of grief; for look how grievously we have sinned, so greatly should we bewail our sins. And hence it is, that the Lord calling the people to sorrow for their sins, doth not require a light sorrow or some small measure of grief, but such a sorrow as should even rent their very hearts, *Joel* 2. 13. And the Prophet *David* saith, in the seventeenth verse of this Psalm, that a mans heart must be contrite and broken, even as it were rent asunder with godly sorrow, or else his repentance will never be

be accepted with God. *David* saith, *Psalm 6. 6. That he watered his couch with tears.* Again, he saith, *Psal. 42. His tears were his meat day and night.* And indeed, it must not be a small measure of sorrow, that we must shew for our sins. For if we had an hundred eyes, and should weep them all out; and if we had a thousand hearts, and they should all break asunder with remorse, and sorrow, all were too little. Yea, although we should even shed tears of blood for our sins, or, with *Jeremy*, have our heads full of water.

Use 1. Folly of natural men described.

This condemneth the common opinion of men and women, they do think it is the easiest thing in the world to repent, to get the pardon of their sins; they do think, that *Lord have mercy upon me* will serve: O! God is merciful, God is merciful; and so make God's mercy a pack-horse of all their filthy sins. But let no man deceive himself. It is another manner of thing to repent than we take it for, it will cost thee many a tear, and many a prayer, before thou canst have a pardon; it will cost thee many a sob, and sigh, and many an oh, oh, ere thou canst be truly assured of the pardon of them.

How do men deceive their own souls? thinking every little glimpse of their sins sufficient: No, no, every sorrow, brings not with it repentance. *Ahab* had sorrow, 1 *King.* 21. *He rent his cloaths, and put on sack-cloath, and fasted,* But this sorrow, was as the morning dew, it did quickly consume away. The like may be said of *Felix Act.* 24. and King *Agrippa*, who at the words of *Paul*,

Paul, could almoſt become a *Chriſtian*; of *Herod*, *Pharaoh*, and the like; all which have had in them a kind of ſorrow, but it was but carnal, the end whereof is death. It muſt then be a godly ſorrow; ariſing from the ſight of our ſins, that we have offended a good and gracious God, and loving Father in Jeſus Chriſt. And this muſt even wound our very Souls, as the people of the *Jews Act.* 2. 37. that we know not which way to turn us for comfort.

Uſe 2. *Pardon of ſin the greateſt mercy.* Pſal. 32. 1.

Let us imitate *David*, let us cry again and again unto the Lord for mercy, let us beg hard for the pardon of our ſins, it is the greateſt mercy in the world. Good things are not eaſily gotten: Heaven, Life eternal are hard to come by, and therefore let us not imagine, that it is ſo eaſie a matter to get the pardon of our ſins: No, no, we muſt fill heaven and earth with cryings and prayers, even as a poor Thief condemned at the Bar, he will cry with tears for mercy. And as a poor Beggar unlappeth his leggs, ſheweth his wounds, and all to move them that paſs by to pity him; So we muſt cry, as for life and death, for the pardon of our ſins, lay open our ſores and griefs unto the Lord, and give him no reſt until we have mercy.

Joh. 1. 29. 1 Joh. 1. 7. Rev. 1. 6. Zac. 13. 1.

Laſtly, it may be demanded what waſhing *David* ſpeaks of here: he ſpeaks not here of the legal waſhing which was uſed in the time of the Law; but he ſpeaks here of that waſhing which is performed only by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, being laid hold on by Faith: For no water whatſoever can waſh away the leaſt ſpot of ſin, but only the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.

So

So then we learn hence, that there is nothing in heaven or earth that can purge us from ſin, and from the uncleanneſs of the ſoul, but only the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, the Lamb of God, being applyed unto us by the hand of Faith : He alone is our Saviour, ſaying perfectly all that are ſaved, *Heb.* 7. *He is able to ſave perfectly all that come unto him*; Heb. 1. 3. *And by him he hath purged our ſins.* So that we are to acknowledge him to be our only and alone Saviour without partner, according to that, *Act.* 2. *There is no other name under heaven given to ſave us, but the name of Chriſt.*

Doct. 8. *Blood of Chriſt purgeth away ſin.* 1 Joh. 1. 5. Heb. 9. 9. Act. 13. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 11.

This ſheweth the weakneſs of the Church of *Rome*, who bear men in hand, that their holy water, as they call it, and conjured ſtuff, is able to waſh away ſin : No, no, it cannot do it, only the blood of Chriſt can do it, and no other Creature in heaven or earth. And therefore, howſoever in word they honour Chriſt, yet in deed they deny him, injoyning to the all-ſufficient ſatisfaction of Chriſt, other ſatisfaction: As their Sacrifice in the Maſs to help Chriſt's ſacrifice on the Croſs; and the interceſſion of the Virgin *Mary*, Saints and Angels, *&c.* to this meritorious interceſſion, robbing God of his honour, and Chriſt of his all-ſufficient merit, running from Chriſt the pure fountain, to the filthy puddle and mire of their own merits, and ſatisfaction. And thus poor Catholick Creatures, they think themſelves trimly waſhed, whereas (alaſs) *they are not purged from their filthineſs, they are as beaſtly as ſwine.*

See

Uſe. Seeing we be all defiled with ſin, original, actual, old, new; let us ſeek to Jeſus Chriſt and deſire to be waſhed, yea, to be bathed and rinſed in his precious blood: Get one drop of it, and ſprinkle our poor ſouls with it, as *Peter* ſaith, heads and hands, and all, both ſoul and body. For that anſwer given by Chriſt unto *Peter* may ſerve for a warning unto us all: *If I waſh thee not, thou*
Joh. 13. 8. *ſhalt have no part with me*; which, if we did well conſider, as well our own pollution, as alſo the neceſſity of Chriſt's waſhing, we ſhould anſwer him, with *Peter*; *O Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head.*

Uſe. If this were *David*'s eſtate and condition, that he was ſo filthy and unclean, (having lain but a ſhort time in ſin) that he cryeth out a main unto the Lord, *to waſh him, to purge him, to cleanſe him.* Oh then, what ſhall we imagine or think of thoſe that not once, but often; not a year, with *David*, but all the dayes of their life, have lived in the common cuſtom and practice of ſinning; that have drunk down iniquity, as a man drinks down water? Their damnation doth not ſleep. And yet poor ſouls, they think, that if they can have but time to remember a few words in the end, as to ſay, *Lord have mercy upon me*, that they ſhall be ſaved. But if it did coſt *David* ſo many ſighs and groans, and tears, as in the ſixth *Pſalm*, which was but a ſhort time in compariſon of others: They much deceive themſelves that do imagine it is ſo eaſie a matter to be waſhed and cleanſed from the pollution of ſin, that have lain therein a long time.

And

And before we can be waſhed and cleanſed from our ſins in the blood of Chriſt, we muſt have a godly ſorrow, which will ſend us to Chriſt Jeſus; we muſt ſee our filthineſs and uncleanneſs, how we ſtand in need to be waſhed; and we muſt deſire it, and beg it with *David*: O Lord, waſh me, rinſe me, bathe me in the blood of Chriſt. Secondly, we muſt have the hand of faith, by which we muſt lay hold on Chriſt's blood, and beſprinkle our ſouls with it; even as a man doth waſh his face with his hand: So faith is the hand of the ſoul, to lay hold and apply Chriſt's Blood, and the merit of it, to cleanſe us, and waſh us from all our ſins.

Godly ſorrow will ſend us to Chriſt.

But alas, poor ſouls, you ſhall ſee many a man and woman that are very curious, and careful to waſh their bodies, and to waſh their cloaths: they will not ſuffer the leaſt ſpot in them, but look to have them waſhed; Yet they can go from year to year, with moſt vile and filthy ſouls, that even ſtink with ſin, and never deſire to be waſhed and rinſed: Yea, many of thoſe who ſeem to be very gay and fair outwardly, carry filthy and unclean hearts within; and if a man could but ſee into their hearts, and perceive the filthy ſpots of ſin, he would ſtop his noſe, and not endure the ſmell of them.

VERSE

VERSE. 3.

For I acknowledge my Iniquities, and my Sin is ever before my eyes.

David's Reason from his former petition.

NOW *David* having thus intreated for favour and grace at God's hands, for his great and hainous ſins, he doth here labour to move the Lord to pity him, becauſe he doth now moſt frankly and freely confeſs his ſins, is truly touched and grieved for them; yea, his poor Conſcience is now upon the rack, wounded and diſtreſſed, and exceedingly afflicted; and therefore he entreateth the Lord to pity him: For I acknowledge and confeſs my ſins againſt God, in thy preſence, before the Prophets and before all thy people, yea, the whole Church of God, by leaving this Pſalm, as a teſtimony of my true repentance and ſorrow for them.

Confeſſion ever goeth before remiſſion.

Hence mark, that there is no place for mercy, nor any peace to be looked for at God's hands, nor any pardon of ſin, before a ſinner be truly humbled, do freely and frankly confeſs the ſame, and humbly acknowledge with grief of heart his ſins unto the Lord; where we are to obſerve two things: Firſt, the Perſon to whom we muſt confeſs our faults. Secondly, the manner how we muſt confeſs them.

Perſon to whom.

For the Perſon to whom we muſt confeſs it is God, as this example of *David* doth teach us, *ver.* 4. *Againſt thee, againſt thee only, have I ſinned.* Again, *Pſal.* 32. *I ſaid I will*

I will confeſs my ſins unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin. It is true indeed, we may by our ſins wrong men, as *David* did *Uriah*: But being in ſin, the chiefeſt wrong is unto the Lord. The Scribes and Phariſees though they were corrupt in many things elſe, yet they held this for a truth, that none could forgive ſins but God only, *Mark.* 2. 7. And this doth the Lord teſtifie of himſelf, *Iſa.* 45. 35. *I, even I am he that putteth away thy iniquities for mine own ſake.* 1 Joh. 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* Beſides, the precepts in the Word of God, there is recorded the repentance of God's Children, who have humbly acknowledged their ſins before God as *Manaſſes*, 2 Chr. 33. *David*, 2 Sam. 2. 11. The Prodigal Son, *Luke* 15. So true is that ſaying, *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that hides his ſin ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth them ſhall have mercy.* And this did *David* prove by his own experience, that ſo long as he held his peace, *Pſal.* 22. 5. and did not acknowledge his ſins unto the Lord, but concealed, ſmothered, and hid them ſo long his poor conſcience was upon the rack, his ſoul was troubled and greatly diſquieted; but after he had confeſſed them and repented of them, the Lord forgave them, and ſhewed him mercy.

Secondly, We muſt confeſs our ſins alſo to men, and that both privately and publickly, as the quality of ſin requireth: For howſoever we condemn auricular confeſſion, as having in it nothing but policy, and a rack to the conſcience; yet we do not only allow,

low, but call and cry for that voluntary confeſſion which every Chriſtian ought to make to their Godly Paſtor, of ſuch ſins as diſquiet the conſcience; and no doubt great bleſſings, and comfort would follow them that uſe this godly practice: And therefore, *Joſh.* 7. 18. When *Joſhua* laboured to bring *Achan* to a ſight of his ſin, he ſaith, *My Son, I beſeech thee give glory to the Lord God of Iſrael, and make confeſſion unto him, and ſhew me now what thou haſt done.* Again, confeſſion muſt be made unto men, and that in reſpect of the Church, that the Congregation that hath been offended, may be ſatisfied; as alſo that others may be terrified from falling into the ſame ſins, 2 *Tim.* 4. 20. *Them that ſin rebuke openly, that the reſt may fear.* And laſt of all, in reſpect of the ſinner himſelf, that thereby he may be more humbled, as that inceſtuous perſon, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. that was delivered up to Satan for his ſin, which brought him to humiliation: Whereas otherwiſe, if the puniſhment were laid only upon their purſe, few or none would regard it.

But withal we muſt know, that a man is not bound to confeſs his ſins to the Miniſter only, and to none elſe, as Papiſts would have men to do to a Frier; but he may make choice of any other Chriſtian friend, according to that of St. *James*, *Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another*, &c.

Seeing true and hearty repentance cannot go without a free and frank confeſſion of ſins, and hearty and humble acknowledge-

ment

ment of them: First, this condemneth all those who are so far from confessing them, that they are not ashamed to justifie their sins, even to patronize them, and to plead for them: As, tell men of their sins and impieties, they answer what need you take care, you shall not answer for my sins, take care for your self: So reprove Swearing, Drunkenness, Pride, *&c.* and men are so far from being humbled, and confessing them, that they justifie them, and say they do but as others do, it is the fashion, and they are not alone: And this is a corruption that we have all by kind, to dissemble our sins. Our Mothers breasts hath given us no other suck. *Adam*, our first Parent, hath taught us, *Gen.* 3. 12. When he was examined, he posted off the matter from himself unto his Wife, *The woman that thou gavest me, she gave me of the fruit and I did eat*; and so it is with all of us, we are loath to make our confession of our sins unto God. Mens sins break forth every day, lying, swearing, drunkenness, *&c.* But where is that man to be found, that hath any care to bewail himself? All this while that men do not confess them, they can have no pardon of them, *Luk.* 13. 5. *Unless ye repent, ye shall all perish.* Now confession is a special part of true repentance. *David* he begins with himself, unrips his own bowels first, and saith, O Lord, it is I that have done this wickedness, and committed this sin against thee, against *Uriah*, and against his wife *Bathsheba*; let me and my Father's house suffer for it, for these sheep have done nothing.

See-

Use 2. Seeing there is no pardon of sin, till we do confess it, and humbly acknowledge it; Let us every one freely acknowledg and confess our sins unto the Lord, lay them open and naked before him; it is the best way to get pardon of them at his hands. Indeed, in the Court of Man, to confess our sin, is the next way to bring shame and punishment, but in the Court of God it is not so; but the next way to have them covered, is to uncover them, and lay them open unto the Lord. I have sinned, saith *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. *The Lord hath taken away the sin, thou shalt not die*, saith the Prophet. When we confess them, then he will cover them: *If we judg our selves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.* Oh then, let us not fear to confess our sins, and lay them open unto the Lord with grief and sorrow; yea, let us deal as a poor Prisoner condemned at the Bar; or, as a poor *Lazarus* or cripple, shew sores, and lay open our wounds, and by that means we shall move the Lord to pity and compassion.

1 Chron. 11. 31.

The manner how we must confess our sins.

Secondly, That we may so confess our sins, and make such an acknowledgement of them, as may be a true confession, and to bring with it a true and unfeigned repentance.

We must, first, take heed that we do know our transgressions, the number of them, the greatness of them, the danger of them, how they make us most vile in the sight of God, and most loathsome. We must know, that we deserve Hell fire, and eternal condemnation for them: For untill a man know his sin, and his conscience be convicted for it,

and

and withal ſee the danger of his ſin, he will never humbly and heartily confeſs the ſame.

I know (ſaith *David*) *mine iniquity.* St. *Peter* did ſo, although for a time he did he knew not what, as a man in a Trance (for ſin may be well be called madneſs) yet afterwards he bethought himſelf, and conſidered what he had done, and lamented his folly with tears; and this is required of us all, *Lam.* 3. 40. *O let us ſearch and try our wayes, and turn unto the Lord.* And the Lord complaineth, *Jer.* 8. 6. That he did hearken, to ſee if there were any man that would repent, and turn to the Lord; but there was no man ſaid, *What have I done?*

And ſurely this complaint may be taken up againſt the people of our Land, or Nation, that notwithſtanding God hath cryed and called unto us ſo often from Heaven, by his powerful voice in his Word, by his mercies, and by his judgments, ſo ſenſibly, that if the Magicians in *Egypt* were amongſt us, they could do no leſs than acknowledge it to be the finger of God; Yet where is the man almoſt to be found that looketh back unto his own ways, to ask the queſtion of his own heart to ſay, *Alas, what have I done?* or, with *David* here, *I know mine iniquities.*

Now there is a twofold knowledge of our ſin: Firſt, general; Secondly, ſpecial. General knowledge never worketh any reformation, for this is found (for the moſt part) in all men, which can ſay they are ſinners: But there is a ſpecial knowledge of ſin, which God will once diſcover unto us, either in mer-

mercy to our good and salvation, as here, to *David*, to *Peter*, to *Mary Magdalen*, &c. or else in wrath, as he did unto *Judas*, *Cain*, *Achitophel*, &c. to their final condemnation; which may teach us all to pray unto the Lord, so to give us the sight of our sins, as that we never despair of his mercy, that our sins may never rise up against us to our confusion.

Secondly, our Confession of our sins must proceed from sorrow of heart for them, with a hatred of them, so as nothing do more grieve us than our Offences.

And this our Saviour Christ insinuateth, *Mat.* 11. 28. *When he calleth only such unto him as are weary and laden, even ready to faint under the burthen of his sins.* And this doth *David* himself confess, *Psal.* 38. *My sins* (saith he) *are as a weighty burden, too heavy for me to bear.* For, when men can run away with their sins, as tho' they were as light as a feather, it is an evident token they were never throughly humbled for them.

Thirdly, It must be frank and free, not wrung out by compulsion; as sometimes a wicked man, when under the rod, may confess his sins, as *Pharaoh*, *Judas*, and the like: But this confession was only by compulsion wrung out of them; it came not from any sorrow or hatred of sin, but for fear of judgment and punishment. But we must be as forward, and as ready to confess them, to the glory of God, as we were to commit them, to his dishonour. Thus did *David* confess his sin, *Psal.* 32. 5. *I acknowledge and confess my sin unto thee, and mine iniquities*

Exod. 16. 17.

quities have I not hid. *Nathan* told *David*, he had ſinned; which words ſtole ſecretly into his heart! For, till he had notice of it, he could not ſhed a tear; for he thought all was ſafe and ſecure. It was God's love to *David*, that the Prophets motion ſhould ſo rowſe and ſtir up ſuch a King as *David* was, to make him diſ-throne himſelf, and forſake his Scepter, and beat his breaſt, ſaying, *I acknowledge mine iniquity, and my ſin is ever before me.* It muſt be without all excuſe, or leſſening of our ſins; we may not mince them or excuſe them, nor diſſemble them, nor cloak them; but lay them open in their colours, rather aggravating them, than diminiſhing them, as ſometimes St. *Auſtin* did.

Fourthly, We muſt confeſs our ſins, with purpoſe to forſake them, according unto that of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 55. *Let the wicked forſake his ways, and the ungodly man his own imagination, and return unto the* Lord.

There muſt be in us a deſire to forſake all our ſins, and every wicked way, elſe there's no true repentance: For one ſin is a ſufficient hold for Satan, and a ſufficient bar to keep out Chriſt Jeſus, as we may ſee by the example of *Herod*, *Mar.* 6. *Judas*, &c.

This ſhews that moſt men and women do not truly repent; for though they can ſay, *God be merciſull unto us, we are all ſinners*; yet in particular they ſee it not; no, they think they keep the Commandments of God; a man can very hardly perſwade them, that they break any of the Commandments in particular; although, in general, and in a confuſed manner, they confeſs themſelves to be ſin-

ſinners, yet in particular they do not ſo; Nay they are ſo far from aggravating their ſins, that they rather extenuate them by all means poſſible, *I am not alone, nor I am not the firſt, nor I hope I ſhall not be the laſt.* For any grief or ſorrow for ſin, it is as far from them, as they are far from it.

Uſe 2. This ſheweth, that thoſe, who, though they confeſs themſelves ſinners, yea, in particular; yet, becauſe they do it not with feeling, with hatred and deteſtation of ſin, therefore they be faulty: For we ſhould even with right ſorrowful hearts, and wounded ſouls, confeſs our ſins, with the greateſt hatred of them as poſſibly we can: So as, often as we ſpeak of them, it ſhould make our hearts to yearn, and tears to ſtand in our eyes.

But moſt of all are here condemned thoſe vile beaſts and filthy ſinners, who are ſo far from ſpeaking of their filthy and beaſtly ſins with hatred and diſlike, that they do in bravery ſpeak of them, with a kind of joy and delight. Now, who would ever think a man to be ſo vile, to brag of his own ſhame, and boaſt of his own filthineſs? If a Priſoner, going in the way to the Gallows ſhould then brag of his robberies, villanies, and be proud of his halter, what a deſperate thing were that? And yet ſuch filthy beaſts there be in the World, who are not aſhamed to boaſt of their own ſhame and filthineſs; to talk, yea, to glory of their own uncleanneſs, and of their filthy drunkenneſs; How they have drunk their ſhare of ſo many quarts of wine; how they have made ſo many drunk,

O Wretch-

O wretched men! it is a wonder that the Houſe falleth not on them, as it did on the *Philiſtines*: or that God raineth not fire and Brimſtone from Heaven to conſume them, as *Sodom* was; or ſmite them dead, like *Herod*.

And my ſin is ever before mine eyes.

Cauſe that moved David to confeſs his ſin.

David having ſhewed how that he had freely confeſſed and acknowledged his ſins unto the Lord; here he ſheweth the cauſe which moved him ſo humbly to acknowledg the ſame: Namely, becauſe they were ever in his ſight, and before his eyes; as if he ſhould have ſaid, howſoever I have a long time continued and lain ſecure in ſin, and did not know or ſee the danger of them; yet now being told of them by the Prophet, I ſee them and ſo behold them, that my conſcience accuſes me of them, and I can have no reſt, but my wounded conſcience doth urge me, and compel me to confeſs my ſins to thee, deſiring thee, O Lord, to chaſten me as a Son, but do not diſ-inherit me for my diſobedience, in having committed theſe hainous ſins and offences againſt thee.

Where, firſt of all, we may behold the dangerous effect of ſin. When the Devil tempts a man unto it, he doth ever obſcure the miſery of ſin, the curſe of God due to ſin, the torments of Hell, and the damnation of body and ſoul in Hell-fire for evermore: Theſe things the Devil doth labour to keep from mans eyes, buzzing only in their ears the profit of ſin, gain, commodity, pleaſure, delight, and ſweetneſs of ſin; that ſo ſhewing only the golden bait of ſin, and

hiding the poyſoned hook, he might move men to run head long into all ſin: But when Satan gets his purpoſe, and men be in his ſnare, and fallen into ſin, Oh how will he then preſs their poor Conſciences? Then he will load them, and ſet out their ſins to the full, in a moſt ugly form: Nothing then but hell-fire, damnation and the curſe of God, that ſo, if it be poſſible, he may draw them into the gulf of deſpair, or like *Job*'s wife, ſay to them, *Curſe God, and dye.*

Oh that men would conſider this in time. How ſin will one day change her countenance, however it cometh at firſt in a flattering form, pretending nothing but friendſhip, but in the end will leave a ſting behind it, even a guilty conſcience, terrour of mind, and anguiſh of Spirit. Wherefore let us fly from ſin, as from the biting of a Serpent, that we be not ſtung therewith unto eternal death: knowing, *the wages of ſin is death.*

Rom. 6. 23.

Doct. *a ſin-accuſing Conſcience, the means to bring us to repentance.*

Whereas *David* ſins being always before him, did urge him to confeſs them; yea, to repent, and beg the pardon of them: We learn, That the remembrance of our ſins, and the calling them to mind, together with a conſcience accuſing for them, is the way and means to come to true repentance, to make a man confeſs them, and beg the pardon of them; Whereas, if they ſlip out of our minds, or we know them not, or we find not our conſciences to accuſe us of them: Alas! We can neither confeſs them, nor truly be humbled, and beg the pardon of them. And therefore *David* confeſſeth here, that by reaſon

reaſon his ſins were ever before him, he was continually vexed and tormented with the horror of them; his conſcience ſtill accuſed and troubled him, and therefore he is conſtrained and urged humbly to confeſs them, and to beg the pardon of them at Gods hands: For indeed, repentance is as neceſſary and as comfortable to a ſinner, as a couch to a weary traveller, or as meat to the hungry ſtomach. Whereas the wrath of God doth ever follow ſuch as have ſleepy and drowſie conſciences, giving them over to a reprobate ſence, to a ſlumbering ſpirit, and to hardneſs of the heart, that they fall to be paſt feeling, and cannot repent, *Rom.* 1. 28. *Such as regarded not to know God, he gave them up to their hearts luſt, unto all uncleanneſs, and puniſht one ſin with another.* And ſurely it is juſt with God, that he ſhould forſake us with his grace, that have forſaken him by our ſins; according to that of the Prophet, *Pſal.* 11. *My people would not hear my voice, and Iſrael would none of me: So I gave them up unto the hardneſs of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counſel.*

Sight of ſin firſt ſtep to Repentance.

So that hence we learn, that a man wil never repent truly of his ſins, ſeek to God for pardon: Neither is there any other way or means to be reconciled to God, but this, to feel the weight and burthen of his ſins, and feeling his conſcience to accuſe him, to vex and wound him, till he find God to be merciful, and reconciled unto him for the pardon of them, and the appeaſing and quieting of the conſcience. And therefore, knowledge muſt go before repentance, to know, as *Na-*

than told *David*, what great ſins we have committed. St. *Auguſtin* ſaith, that many men loſe their ſtrength, becauſe they do depend upon their own ſtrength; and if we withdraw our obedience from God, he will withdraw his bleſſings from us, and then we run head-long into all kind of ſin, and ſo wound our conſciences, that we are never at reſt.

Seeing till ſuch time as the conſcience be wounded for ſin, and vexed and tormented with it, a man will never ſpeak for pardon; Then we learn hence, that no man can taſte of the ſweetneſs of Gods mercy in Chriſt for his ſalvation, until he have taſted of the bitter fruit of ſin, and of a wounded and diſtreſſed conſcience: Look on *Pharaoh* and the *Jews*. And as for thoſe that would taſte of Gods mercy, and yet are loath to feel the ſmart of ſin, they deceive themſelves. We ſee, that ere the body be purged, men muſt take bitter pills, or bitter potions: And as for thoſe who never felt any ſuch grief nor wound of Conſcience, no ſuch aſtoniſhment for their ſins, they may juſtly fear their repentance is not ſound, that they have not as yet been truly humbled: For it is certain, that before we can truly repent, and be reconciled to God, we muſt have the feeling of the ſmart of ſin, and find our hearts troubled, and our Conſciences wounded. *David* by his repentance made a breach, and by his true contrition pulled down the ſtrong hold of ſin and Satan, which the Devil and his legions of fiends had raiſed in him; for ſaith he, *My ſin is ever before me*: For indeed all our repentance proceeeds from Gods grace; for

Pſ. 6. 32. Act. 2. 3.

Such may ſuſpect their repentance, who feel not ſin to wound their conſciences.

for we cannot repent when we would, or have it by nature; and the ſoul which lies dead in ſin, can no more perform true repentance, than the body in the grave can diſpoſe it ſelf to the laſt reſurrection. It is the Lord only which plows up the furrows of our hearts; that is, humbles us with a ſenſe of his diſpleaſure, as he did *David*; therefore the root of repentance is God, and his proceeding is by his two hands, Juſtice and Mercy, which *Jeremy* calls the Hammer and Fire by which the Lord works the ſoul, and makes it capable of eternal life, and union with Chriſt: All this *David* did ſtrive for and he watered his eyes by day, and his Couch by night, with his tears of true repentance.

This confutes that fond and fooliſh opinion of many in the World, who if they ſee any wounded for ſin, diſtreſſed in ſoul, crying out of his miſery, and feeling his conſcience exceedingly terrified, and begins to deſpair of Gods mercy: What do men judge of ſuch a man? Surely that it is nothing but Melancholly and dumpiſhneſs, and therefore they counſel him to be jocund, to go into merry company, to put away ſuch odd conceits, ſuch vain and fooliſh fancies; but alas, poor ſouls, they conſider not that it is the ſpecial work of God, wounding the conſcience for ſin, that they feel the wrath of God for ſin, and are troubled and vexed for that and till God give mercy, and reconciliation be had in Chriſt, there can be no peace.

Vſe 3. Dead conſcience a heavy judgment.

We learn hence, that it is better to have an accuſing conſcience for ſin, than to have a dead conſcience, a benummed conſcience, a ſleepy and ſlumbering conſcience, a ſeared and frozen conſcience: for if a mans conſcience do daily bring his ſins to mind, ſo that he ſets them before his eyes, then he will not only be grieved for them, but will confeſs them, and beg the pardon of them; but when a man hath a ſlumbering conſcience, that is benummed, then he goes on in ſin from day to day, never feeleth any ſmart of it, nor ever deſires the pardon of it; as the poor Jews, who ſeeing their fearful eſtate, cry out, *What muſt we do to be ſaved?* So do all wounded conſciences, ſeeing their fearful ſins, and wretched eſtate, cry out for mercy, and ſeek for pardon.

Act. 2. 37.

Oh, it is a ſign of a fearful judgment of God, to have a ſleepy, or a drowſie conſcience: It is like a wild beaſt, which ſo long as it lies aſleep, ſeemeth very tame and gentle, but when he is rouſed, flies into a mans face. Even ſo howſoever a mans conſcience may ſeem for a time to be quiet, and men may think they have a good conſcience indeed, ſo long as they imagine none knows of their ſins and iniquities but themſelves; yet being awaked by the Miniſter of God, it will break out into humility, as *David*, ſaying, *I am the man, I have ſinned, and done this evil, and am worthy to have croſſes and afflictions come upon me.*

Doct. 3. *Neceſſary duty to call our ſins to account.*

Seeing *David* doth acknowledge here, that his ſins being ever before him, awaked him, and urged him inſtantly, and earneſtly to

ſeek

ſeek for pardon, we learn, That it is a good thing for us to call our ſins to account, to have them often in mind, to ſet them before our eyes, the greatneſs, number and hainouſneſs of them. It was no diſgrace for *David* (though he was a King) to fall down at Gods mercy ſeat, and to lay open his ſins as he did; it was his next way to obtain quietneſs to his ſoul and mind, and to have forgiveneſs.

Firſt, It is a good means to prepare to true repentance, and humiliation for them. *Lam.* 3. 40.

Secondly, it is a ſpecial means to make us hate them, and diſlike them, ſeeing the danger of them, how loathſome they be in Gods ſight.

Thirdly, the remembrance of our ſins makes us wary, that we fall not into them again; but our former falls make us to take heed of falling in time to come.

Fourthly, the remembrance of our ſins makes us pity other men; becauſe, though they fall dangerouſly, yet we know we have fallen as well as they; therefore we hope, God will give unto them repentance.

Fifthly, the continual remembrance of our own ſins puts us in mind of Gods mercy, in the pardon of them: And when men eaſily ſuffer their old ſins to paſs away, and ſlip out of their minds, they will eaſily fall into new, and eaſily forget the mercy of God, and how much they be bound unto him. *Paul* gives this excellent example, who remembring how he had perſecuted the *Church*, ſaith, *Notwithſtanding, God was merciful unto me.* So that the continual re- 1 *Tim.* 1.

membrance of our ſins puts us in mind of Gods merciful dealing with us, and muſt ſtir us up to thankfulneſs.

For if we forget them, the Lord will remember them: and if we remember them, the Lord will forget them. This then ſhould make every man beware, how he forgetteth his ſins, and caſts them careleſly behind his back; for this is a ſign that God remembers them, and will call that man to account for them.

Uſe 1. This ſhews the great impiety of thoſe men and women, who ſeek all means to put their ſins out of their minds, to ſmother the checks of their conſciences by ſports and paſtimes, by merry company, or by other means, to keep themſelves from the ſight of their ſins. They cannot abide to hear of them by others, or to imagine of them themſelves, but put away the remembrance of them by all means poſſible, by the delights of the world, and by company, as I ſaid before; which is even as much, as when a man hath burnt his finger, preſently he puts it into cold water, thinking thereby to find eaſe; but taken out again, this inflames it the more, and doth give it no true eaſe. Oh! this ſhould make men ever repent, and be humbled for their ſins. Oh! this ſhould make them confeſs their ſins with tears, and beg the pardon of them.

Note of a wicked man.

Uſe 2. It muſt ſtir us up to the ſerious and often meditation of our ſins, to keep them in memory, our old and new ſins, open and ſecret, even ſins of our youth, to humble us and to cauſe us to keep in mind the end-

Pſal. 25.

leſs

leſs mercy of God in pardoning of them; and therefore we ſhould do well to ſet ſome time apart to call our life to account: *Tremble and ſin not, commune with your hearts upon your bed, and be ſtill:* Where *David* calls upon *Sauls* Courtiers, to fear Gods judgements and threatnings. It is a ſpecial means to humble us, and to move us to repentance to keep a note of all our offences and faults that we may ever have matter to humble our hard and ſtony hearts. *Pſal.* 4. 5.

We ſee the cauſe here why ſo few do truly repent, and confeſs their faults unto God, and beg the pardon of them; Namely, becauſe that their ſins be ever out of their ſight; though they pry into, and eſpy the faults of other men, and have them in their ſight, yet do they caſt their own behind them; and by that means, never ſetting their ſins in ſight, they forget them, and be never humbled for them; but the Lord threatneth all ſuch, that if they will not ſet their ſins before them, then will he take the pains to ſet them all in order before them, one by one, *Pſal.* 50. *I will reprove thee and ſet before thee the things that thou haſt done; O conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.* *Uſe* 1. *Cauſe why ſo few do repent.*

When, as *David* ſaith, in the confeſſing of his ſins, that they were ever in his ſight. Firſt, they all this while grieve and vex him, wound his ſoul and conſcience; We learn, that ſin once known and felt, doth ſo accuſe and wound the conſcience of a poor ſinner, that there can be no reſt and quietneſs until it be pardoned: For it is ever in his Doct. 4. *Sin once known doth ever accuſe till it be pardoned.*

ſight, and before his eyes, troubling and vexing his mind, and wounding his conſcience. Therefore this made *David* to confeſs, ſaying, *Thou O Lord, didſt convert my heart, and ſet my crooked will and wandring mind in frame.* And as it was with *David*, ſo it fares with every poor ſinner; after the Lord in mercy opens our eyes, to come to the knowledge of our ſins, and our miſery by them, ſo as our conſciences do accuſe us, and we feel the weight of Gods anger preſſing down our ſouls, there can be nothing but hell and anguiſh for the preſent time, nothing but extream ſorrow and vexation of ſpirit, until we find ſome comfortable anſwer from God for the pardon of them. As we ſee a poor Priſoner arraigned, convicted, and condemned to Death; there is nothing but ſorrow and grief; no joy in Wife, Child, Friends, Lands, Livings, Gold or Silver, Meat or Muſick: Only the gracious pardon of the King can revive him, and make a glad man. So it is with a poor ſinner arraigned in his own conſcience for ſin, convicted and condemned in his own ſoul, before the bar of Gods judgments: Nothing can now comfort him, and cheer him up, and revive his wounded conſcience, but a gracious pardon from the Almighties mercy, ſealed with the blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away the ſins of the World.

Uſe 1. Undirect courſe that worldings take.

This ſhews the miſerable and pitiful eſtate of many thouſands in the World, who lye in ſin, ſleep in ſin, and never ſeek for pardon, never ſeek for mercy at the hands of God; and if they find and feel their ſins, then they run

run to this vanity, to that paſtime, to ſmother the checks of their conſciences, and by merry Company, in Eating and Drinking, Carding, Dicing, *&c.* ſeek to ſtop the mouth of their Conſciences and to ſmother it. But alas, we ſee this is cold Muſick for a wounded Conſcience: *Saul* thought to have prevailed by this, at what time he called *David* to play, and to make Muſick before him, but by and by, his wound was greater: For theſe men that ſeek by ſuch devices to ſtop the mouth of their Conſciences, they do as a man that is in the fit of a burning Ague he is hot, and to cool his heat, he drinketh a draught of cold water; that indeed (for the preſent) will ſomewhat allay the heat of the diſeaſe, yet by and by his fit is increaſed and made the worſe.

Let us then never give any reſt to our ſouls, until we have gotten the aſſured perſwaſion of the pardon of all our offences; for ſo long as the conſcience doth accuſe for ſin, ſo long we ſhall find no reſt nor quietneſs: No, there is no peace till we be reconciled to God by true repentance; and till the conſcience leave accuſing, let us never leave repenting, and truly humble our ſelves for the pardon of our ſins. None can forgive our ſins but God; all worldly and humane help is not to be reſpected: Therefore we ought to pray, and be moſt frequent in our petitions, that God would forgive us our ſins. Man never goes to heaven for any thing if he can get it by humane help: when the Phyſician of the body gives us over, then we are content to become Gods Patients.

Uſe. 2.

Rom. 5. 1.

It

It is to be obſerved, that *David*, in the confeſſing of his ſins, ſaith, *I acknowledge my ſins*; not ſpeaking of his hainous ſin of Adultery alone, but of many ſins wrapped up together from his youth: For he did not only commit Adultery with *Bathſheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*, but ſhed alſo his guiltleſs and innocent blood: Yea, with him cauſed, as it is like, many of his good Subjects and Loyal Souldiers to be ſlain. He ſought for to cover his ſins cloſely and ſecurely, by bidding *Uriah* to go home to his Wife, that ſo the child might be thought to be his. And to all theſe he added this, that he laid the whole Church open to the Enemy, and to the Anger of God.

Doct. 5. *Sin never goes alone.*

Hence note then for our inſtruction, that *David* confeſſeth, one ſin will never go alone, but ſin goes by couples, by heaps, one in the neck of another, as he that taketh a Chain by the end, and pulleth but one link, all the reſt do follow: So, if a man give liberty to one ſin, that ſin will not go alone, but draweth another: Adultery will often bring murther with it; ſwearing, lying with it; ſo drunkenneſs, whoredom, *&c.* The Apoſtle biddeth us, *Not to walk as children of darkneſs, in ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs; not in chambering and wantonneſs; not in ſtrife and envying*; Shewing unto us, that ſins go by couples, and one draweth on another, and will hardly go alone.

Rom. 13. 13.

It is like a Gangrene, or Canker, it freteth and eateth further and further; the hand infecteth the Arm, and the foot the leg, and ſo one Member another, till it hath ſpread

it

it ſelf over the whole body, if the part that is infected be not cut off at the beginning. This doth the Apoſtle teach, 2 *Tim.* 2. 16. *Shun prophane and vain babblings, for they increaſe unto more ungodlineſs, and their words will fret as doth a Canker.* St. *James* alſo ſheweth the fruitfulneſs of ſin, ſaying *when luſt hath conceived, it brings forth ſin, and ſin when it is finiſhed, it brings forth death.* And as ſin doth increaſe, ſo doth Gods judgments, *Levit. chap.* 26. 21, 23. *If ye walk ſtubbornly againſt me, and will not obey me, I will then bring ſeven times more plagues upon you, according to your ſins; yet, if by theſe ye will not be reformed by me, but walk ſtubbornly againſt me, then will I alſo walk ſtubbornly againſt you, and I will yet ſmite you ſeven times for your ſins.* And thus we ſee again, how God will keep a proportion betwixt our ſins and his puniſhment.

Seeing this is the curſed nature of ſin, that one will never go alone, but one will draw on another. Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Murder, *&c.* it ſtands us all in hand to take heed that we give liberty to no ſin, live in none, delight in none; for if we do, we ſhall ſurely find, that one ſin will never go alone; but let us abhor all: Hate every ſin, and ſtrive againſt all. We ſee this common in the world, that if a man ſhall yeild to one ſin, by and by it will draw him to another; and often (as it was in *David*) Whoredom will bring Murder with it. ſometimes of the Huſband, ſometimes of the Child, ſometimes of two or three; and therefore let us be very careful to ſhun and avoid every ſin, live in none:

Uſe. 3.

Note.

none: For though one ſin be enough to carry a man to the gulph of Hell, yet one will never go alone by it ſelf.

We may ſee this in the example of *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 8. He was reproved of God for his malice conceived againſt his Brother; *But he hearkned not unto the voice of the* Lord, *but hardened his heart, and ſhed innocent blood, even the blood of his* Brother. This appeareth in *Judas*, *Matth.* 26. Having once entertained covetouſneſs in his heart, he fell from covetouſneſs to treaſon; and at the laſt became his own Judge and Executioner.

The like we may behold in *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 16. 1. *Who fell away from God ſtep by ſtep, until the Spirit of God had utterly forſaken him and he brake out into open rebellion againſt God Almighty.*

For as amongſt all the bleſſings which the Lord doth beſtow upon the Sons of men in this World, a ſoft and tender heart is one of the greateſt, which is checked, and controuled, and ſoon made to bleed; ſo there can be no greater curſe laid upon a man than to have a rebellious heart, which hoardeth up every day vengeance againſt it ſelf.

VERSE

VERSE 4.

4. *Againſt thee, againſt thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight: That thou maiſt be juſt when thou ſpeakeſt, and pure when thou judgeſt.*

NOw in this Verſe, and the two which follow, *David* proceedeth in the humble acknowledgment and confeſſion of his ſins: Firſt, his actual ſins: Secondly, from them he cometh to the fountain and original of all ſin; namely, his natural corruption, wherein he was conceived and born; and this Original ſin he ſpeaketh of in the next Verſe following.

In this verſe David *acknowledgeth his ſpecial ſins.*

This fourth Verſe containeth in it two parts; Firſt, a free acknowledgment of his particular, ſpecial, and actual ſins: In the ſecond, he doth clear the Lord of all cruelty and injuſtice, that howſoever the Lord, had not only ſharply reproved him by the miniſtry of *Nathan*, but alſo puniſhed him, and grievouſly afflicted him for his ſins, in taking away the child that was born in Adultery: Yet he doth acknowledge the Lord to be juſt and righteous in all his ways.

Two parts

In the firſt part of the Verſe, conſider, firſt, the party to whom he confeſſeth, *Againſt thee, againſt thee only*; where he ſheweth the great dolour and extream grief of his mind for his ſin againſt God, in that he doubleth the words, *Againſt thee, againſt thee.* Secondly, we are to obſerve how he doth acknowledge his ſpecial and particular ſins; namely,

namely, Adultery, Murther, and ſhedding of innocent blood, *I have ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.*

(*Againſt thee.*) Theſe words are expounded diverſly: Firſt, that it is as much as if *David* ſhould have ſaid, Oh Lord, howſoever I have grievouſly offended in committing Adultery and Murther; yet I have ſo hid my faults from man, that there is none that knew it but thou alone; ſo that he acknowledgeth all the ſin was againſt God, becauſe no morral man was privy to his ſins.

Others expound it thus: That although *David* had offended againſt man, yet he was ſpecially wounded and grieved, for that he had broken the Law of God; ſo that tho' it be true, that he had done great wrong to his faithful ſervant and moſt loyal ſubject, *Uriah*; yet here was that which pricked his heart, and wounded him to the quick, namely becauſe he had offended his moſt merciful and loving God. As if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord my God, although the whole World ſhould clear me, and no man living ſhould accuſe me, yet it grieveth me at the very heart, becauſe I have offended thee my moſt merciful God.

Doct. 1. *A mans ſins are open before God.*

Hence firſt I note, That howſoever a man may hide his ſins from men and Angels; yet it is impoſſible to hide them from the All-ſeeing eyes of the Almighty. *David* had committed Adultery cloſely, he had laboured to hide it, and cover it, by marrying *Bathſheba* the Wife of *Uriah*, but yet alas, all his ſhifts and cunning fetches could not hide it from God: He ſaw it, and obſerved it; and

now

now *David* confeſſes the ſame; *Againſt thee, againſt thee*: The like we ſhall ſee in *Joſephs* brethren, when they ſold him into *Ægypt*; ſo in *Jezebel*, in putting *Naboth* to death; ſo in theſe days men be cunning to commit Adultery cloſely, and in the twilight, in a dark corner, in cloſe and ſecret manner, to lie, ſteal, deceive, commit adultery, fornication, and all uncleanneſs? But (poor ſouls) they do deceive themſelves, for they cannot hide their ſins from Gods all-ſeeing eyes, night and day is all one to him; yea, the Lord doth ſearch the very hearts and reins, *underſtanding our very thoughts long before*; 1 King. Chap. 8. 39. *The Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth every word of the mind.* Again, Pſal. 139. 4. *Thou knoweſt my ſitting down, and my riſing up, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts long before; there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knoweſt it altogether.* And ſurely when this perſwaſion taketh place, that the Lord is preſent every where, and beholds all things; there doth Religion, Conſcience, and true Obedience begin in that man. For he that hath the Lord always before him will not greatly fall, *Pſalm* 19. 8. *Heb.* 4. 13. For the Lord will find out every tranſgreſſion, tho' never ſo ſecretly concealed; which may teach us, in all things to keep Faith and a good conſcience; for although we may delude men, yet we cannot deceive the Almighty.

Gen. 37. 1 *Reg.* 21. *Rev.* 1. 18. *Pſ.* 51. 4. *Be, as thou ſeemeſt; Or ſeem as thou art.*

This condemns the extream folly and madneſs of men and women, who, if they can hide their faults from men, they care for no

Uſe 1. *Folly of ſinners deſcribed.*

no more; And therefore, they do labour to commit them closely and secretly. But use all thy skill and policy, yet thou canst by no means hide thy sins from the clear sight of God.

Thou maiest lie, dissemble, and deceive so closely, that neither men nor Angels can detect thee: Thou maiest commit Adultery in the dark, and under a Canopy, so as no man living shall be privy to it: Thou maiest steal when none can see thee; but all this while, Heb. 4 13. remember that thou standest naked and discovered before God. He sees thee, his All-seeing eyes, like to a flame of fire, pierce into thy heart and entrails. Many men, like *Gehazi*, when they have sinned, can wipe their mouths smoothly, and demurely say, *Thy servant went no whither.* But let them remember ever, that it is impossible to hide their transgressions from God, though they may cover them from men; But of this hereafter.

Use 2. This same Doctrine may serve for an excellent preservative against all secret sins? for this is the cursed nature of man, to abstain many times from actual sins, only for shame, or for fear of punishment, which otherwise would make no conscience of sin. Oh that such men would remember, that tho' they be out of the sight of men, yet they be in the presence of the Almighty; he sees them, and beholds them, even in the darkest night, and in the secret corner; his eyes are like to a flame of fire, *Rev.* 2. 18. And although men may blear the eyes of men, yet they cannot blear the eyes of the Almighty.

It

It would be an excellent means to withhold them, and keep them from many horrible crimes, which otherwiſe they would commit. For the Lord looketh narrowly upon us, and ſearcheth very ſtrictly into us; we cannot have the leaſt unclean thought within us, but he, who is moſt pure, doth ſee and behold us. He could diſcover *Judas* his hypocriſie, and therefore called him a Devil. He ſees again *Nathaniels* ſincerity, and therefore pronounceth him *a true Iſraelite, in whom there was no guile.* So that they that commit ſin in ſecret, he that ſees in ſecret, will one day reward them openly. When *Cain, Gen.* 4. 5. brought unto God an Oblation of the fruit of the ground, he had no regard to him, nor to his offering, becauſe the Lord ſaw the ſecret hypocriſie of his heart. And this is the reaſon that *David* uſeth to perſwade *Solomon* his Son to have a care to learn and practice the will of God, 1 *Chro.* 28. 8. *And thou Solomon, my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord ſearcheth all hearts.*

Whereas the Prophet *David* repeateth the words, *Againſt thee, againſt thee*: Here mark the extream ſorrow and grief of *Davids* heart, that he had ſinned againſt his merciful God. What was it that ſo grieved his ſoul? The ſhame of the ſin could not; for that was not known but to God only: Neither fear of puniſhment; for what man durſt be ſo bold as to call him to account; but that he had been ſo vile and wretched, to ſin againſt his moſt loving God;

Doct. *What ſorrow it is that accompanies repintance.*

The Perſon whom he had offended.

God; this was the thing that made his heart to bleed, Which muſt teach us all this Leſſon, that whenſoever we fall into any ſin, this conſideration, above all others, ſhould ſink deepeſt into our hearts; namely, the conſideration of the Perſon whom we have offended, and that not ſimply againſt man, but againſt God himſelf.

Davids *ſin aggravated.* 2 *Sam.* 12.

And this ſin of *David* is aggravated in divers reſpects.

Firſt, *Nathan* telleth him, Almighty God hath beſtowed upon him that Kingdom, and the Wives of his Lord, and if that had been too little, he would have given him more, 2 *Sam.* 12. 8.

Secondly, that *David*, a man whom God had ſo highly honoured, that had taken him from a Sheep fold, and gave to him a Scepter; which by his mighty power made him eſcape the hands of all his Enemies, and had graced him with the gift of his Spirit; who had made ſo great proceedings in Religion and the worſhip of God: It could not but cut him and wound him at the very heart, that he ſhould ſo wickedly and foully fall into ſuch grievous ſins.

Thirdly, in that his example ſhould bring a great ſlander to the Church of God, and open the mouth of the uncircumciſed *Philiſtines*, to reproach and revile them, as we ſee in *Shimei*.

Fourthly, in that he had by his ſins laid open the Church and People of God unto his judgments, to plague and puniſh them.

True note of Repentance.

Now from this practice of *David*, we learn that which I taught before, namely, that

that the children of God are grieved for ſin, becauſe it offends and diſpleaſes their merciful God. *David* needed not to have been ſo much troubled for his ſin; either in ſhame, for it was not known but to God alone, or puniſhment, for none could call him to account; but that he had offended his merciful God and loving Father, it did torment and vex his conſcience exceedingly: So every child of God that truly repents of ſin, grieves more becauſe it offends God, than for fear of ſhame or puniſhment; as we ſee it in *David*, Pſal. 119. *I have hid thy word within my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* The like we may ſee in *Joſeph*, Gen. 29. when he was tempted to lewdneſs by his adulterous Miſtreſs, his anſwer is worthy to be remembred of us; *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* The wrong that he ſhould have done unto his Maſter did not ſo much prevail with him as that he knew he ſhould ſin againſt God: And the like may be ſaid of *Peter*, *Mat.* 26 who remembring how kind and loving Chriſt had been to him, even to pray to his Father for him, when Satan deſired to buffet him; That told him, *Mat.* 16. *That the gates of hell ſhould not prevail againſt him*: This looking back of this his Maſter wounded him to the heart, that he ſhould ſin againſt him, ſo cowardly to deny him.

Well ſeeing this is the nature of true repentance, of godly ſorrow, and remorſe of Conſcience for ſin, that the child of God is grieved for his ſin, becauſe it diſpleaſeth God, his moſt loving and merciful Father; *Uſe* 1.

as

as in *Joseph*, *David*, and the prodigal Son, *&c.* Let us labour to find our hearts thus affected, that we can mourn for sin, because it is sin that offendeth God our loving Father: Though none know of it, nor could accuse us for it; nay although there were no Hell, nor Judgment for to condemn us, yet that we find our hearts wounded for our seceret sins, for our close and hidden transgressions; because we know they offend our most gracious God and loving Father.

Let it be far from us to say with *Pharaoh*, Exod. 5. *who is the Lord, that I should be afraid to sin?* Oh know, (O man) whatsoever thou art, that exaltest thy self in this manner, to sin with a high hand against the Almighty, that the Lord is a consuming fire: It is he that drowned *Pharaoh* and all his Host, *Exod.* 14. It is he that made *Jerusalem* a heap of stones, *Mat.* 26. It is he that suddenly destroyed *Herod*, *Act.* 12. and sent fire upon *Sodom*, *Gen.* 19. Learn therefore to know God aright, and it will make thee quake and tremble to sin against him.

Use 2. This sheweth, that most mens repentance is but counterfeit and unsound: For, were it not for fear of shame and punishment, they could be content to commit sin, to live in sin from day to day, as *Potiphars* Wife tempted *Joseph* continually to sin and uncleanness: Alas, she thought not that God would see and behold it. But whatsoever thou art, unless thou find thy heart humbled for thy close and hid[illegible]n sin, and thy secret corruptions, I tell thee, thou

Gen. 39.

art

art not truly humbled; the verieſt Beaſt and Atheiſt that ever lived, may confeſs his known ſins, and in regard of the ſhame and puniſhment, be ſorry for them; as *Pharaoh*, *Judas*, *Saul*, *Simon Magus*, &c. But here is godly ſorrow, which brings repentance never to be repented of: To be grieved for ſin, though we ſhould have neither ſhame nor puniſhment, ſeeing it offendeth a gracious and merciful God: As we ſee two children, one is a natural, loving, and dutiful child, and he is loath to offend his Father, though he never corrects him, becauſe he ſees his Father kind unto him. Another that is of a froward nature, he is loath to offend before his Father, for fear of the whip; and therefore out of his Fathers ſight he will play his pranks.

Exod. 20. 2 *Sam.* 1. *Mat.* 27. *Act.* 8.25.

A Simile.

In that *David* thus lays open his ſin, though it was ſecret, and doth aggravate it: We learn, That he that truly repenteth of his ſins, will not excuſe it, mince it, hide it, and cloak it, and ſeek ſtarting holes to conceal it; but he will truly and humbly acknowledge it, lay it open, and make it manifeſt unto God. He doth not blame the folly of the woman, nor by any means ſeek to hide his ſins, but layeth them open before the Lord: *Againſt thee have I ſinned.* So it is the manner of Gods children that do truly repent, to lay open their ſins in the worſt and vileſt form, to make them greater, not leſſer.

Doct. 2. *A penitent perſon never excuſes ſin.*

Well then, this doth ſhew, that thoſe men are not truly humbled, neither yet have truly repented, that do ſeek ſtarting holes for their

Uſe 2. *Note of wicked men.*

their ſin : I am not alone, if I go to Hell, I ſhall have more company : It is but the faſhion, and I do no worſe than ſwear by Faith, Troth, *&c.* the Lord I hope will pardon me. This excuſing and cloaking of ſin is a token of a naughty and diſſembling heart, that That man or woman is not truly humbled as they ſhould : We ſee this in *Saul*, he was ſo far from aggravating and increaſing his ſin, that he found out many excuſes ; *The people did it, and it was to offer Sacrifice* : So the wicked, in their Pilgrimage, are ſo far from confeſſing their ſins, that they rather excuſe them. So that it is a true note of a wicked and graceleſs heart to excuſe ſin, to hide it, and cover it ; and he that doth ſo, ſhall never find mercy.

1 *Sam.* 15 *Mat.* 15.

Prov. 28 13.

Againſt thee, againſt thee only have I ſinned.

IT may here be demanded, how *David* could ſay, that he had only ſinned againſt God ? Did he not ſin againſt *Uriah* his faithful ſervant, and loving ſubject : Firſt, in committing Adultery with his Wife, and then in cauſing his guiltleſs blood to be ſhed ? How then could *David* ſay here, *Againſt thee (only) have I ſinned ?*

I anſwer, Firſt, *David* had ſinned indeed againſt *Uriah*, and that two ſeveral ways : Firſt, in his Wife, not in his goods ; for then perhaps he might have made a nends ; but taking his Wife out of his Boſom (as *Nathan* telleth him) he could never make recompence ; when *Abimelech* a Heathen King *Gen.* 20. did ignorantly take *Abrahams* Wife into

into his houſe when he knew the ſame, (although he defiled her not, yet) gave *Abraham* a large gift for ſatisfaction. What ſatisfaction then might *David* give, being not a Heathen man, but a Prophet of the Lord, who wittingly takes the Wife of *Uriah* and defiled her?

Secondly, beſides his Wife, he taketh away his Life alſo; the Devil could ſay, *Job* 2. 4. *Skin, for Skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his Life*; yet as precious as a mans life is unto him, *David* addeth this injury to the former, taking away his Life alſo.

Again, *David* ſinned not only againſt the Husband, but againſt the Wife, alſo corrupting her chaſt mind, and alluring her unto wickedneſs.

And unto this ſin committed againſt *Uriah*, and his Wife, I might add the ſin againſt the child begotten in Baſtardy: The innocent blood of all thoſe of his Loyal Subjects that were ſlain with *Uriah*; his ſin againſt his own houſe and Family; as alſo his tranſgreſſions againſt the whole Church and people of God, laying them open to Gods judgments for his ſake. But yet, all theſe ſins againſt men, how great or how grievous ſoever they were, he accounteth them as nothing in compariſon of his ſin againſt God: *Peter*, he muſt have a ſilly Cock to remember him of his ſin; *David*, he muſt have a *Nathan* to tell him, ſaying, *Thou art the man*; and therefore, ſaith he, *Againſt thee only have I ſinned.*

Secondly, I answer, that all sins of what sort soever they be, they be great sins, because they be against the Law of the Almighty; and were it not for the Law of God forbidding sin, and commanding vertue, there should be no sin: For what is sin but the transgression of the Law of God? and therefore *David* acknowledgeth his sins were against God, he had rebelled, and transgressed his Law and Commandments: He had not now to do with *Uriah*, or any mortal man, but with the just and most righteous God, whose holy Law he hath most rebelliously broken and violated: For if the Lord had not forbidden men to commit adultery, it should be no sin; and if the Lord had not said, *Thou shalt not kill*, it were then no more sin to kill a man, than to kill a dog: But seeing the Law of God forbiddeth it, therefore it is a sin; and deserveth eternal damnation, if not repented of. Omission of the duty which God requires at our hands, is as bad as the commission of the act it self: Good men will startle at the least sin, like *Joseph*, who said *How can I do this thing, and sin against God?* God forbid that I should do it; and as God hath forbid us to do this sin, and many such others, so (good God) do thou still forbid us by thy preventing grace, to do it, or the like sins.

Mat. 5. 21.

Doct. 5. *God alone can forgive sin.*

Seeing all sin is the transgression of the Law of God, whether it be immediately as the sins of the first table; or mediately, when in sinning against our Brother, we do sin against God: It followeth, that God alone

lone can pardon and forgive ſin; for it belongeth to him alone to pardon the fault, againſt whom it was committed: But all ſin is againſt Gods Law, therefore he alone can pardon and forgive it. And this is affirmed by the Phariſees, *Luk.* 5.21. *Who can forgive ſin but God alone?*

No creature hath this power; for he that can forgive ſins and treſpaſſes, muſt be able to take away the puniſhment of ſin, which is Death, Hell and damnation. Now then, to ſay, that a man can properly forgive ſin, it is in effect to ſay, that a man hath power over death and Hell, which cannot poſſibly be.

Seeing none can pardon ſin but God only, becauſe all ſin is againſt God alone: No man on earth, no Saint or Angel in Heaven, can pardon and forgive ſins, but only Almighty God. This condemneth the blaſphemous and erroneous doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, who do hold, and teach, that the Pope can as truly, and as properly forgive ſins, as God himſelf. This one point of doctrine, taught and held by the Church of *Rome*, doth prove their Pope to be Antichriſt, even that man of ſin that the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of, who makes himſelf equal to God; And as Almighty God can forgive ſins, ſo will his Holineſs forgive ſin; and whereas God never gave any ſinner pardon of his ſins, before they were committed, and repented; yet the Pope can, and do give out his Pardons for a ſum of Money, for ſins paſt, preſent, yea, for twenty years to come for treaſon, for murther, adultery, yea, any

Doct 1.

Pope Antichriſt.

Horrible impiety.

sin; Than which what can be more blasphemous and dangerous, to give men License to commit sin, and open a gap to all manner of Villany? For who will be afraid to sin, if he may have a pardon for sin before it be committed.

Therefore, when we have committed a sin, let us not think to fly from God, as from a temporal Judge; no, rather run we unto him by our confessing and acknowledging our sins, and then he will forgive us our sins; *for he that hides his sin, shall not prosper, but he that confesseth his sins shall find mercy.* We have too little shame in us, when we commit sin, and too much shame in us when we confess it: For without confession, repentance is but a dumb shew; for our confession is a glory to God and much honour we do unto him by our confession; but so long as we do not confess our sins, we are aliens and strangers at the Throne of Grace and Mercy.

We must be humbled before we can be honoured; we must be broken by our repentance, before, we can be made vessels of glory. There is commonly a disease, before there can be a cure. All the holy men of God still confessed their sins, before they found favour at Gods hand. *Davids* confession was from his heart, it was really, and a true saying, *I have sinned*: For confession without sorrow of heart, is but lip-labour; so the ear without observing, is but ear-service; and charity without the heart, is but hand-labour. The Psalmist saith plainly, *That he that doth not confess his sins, shall*

shall not prosper; I say, those that will not repent and confess their sins while they live shall one day come with shame in their faces, crying to the Hills to cover them, and the Rocks to fall upon them, with fear in their hearts, and a guilty conscience in their bosoms.

Seeing *David* confesseth that he had sinned against God alone, he doth acknowledge though all men should pardon his sins, and wink at them, yea, should seek to flatter him being a King, yet he could not be so satisfied, because the sin was against Gods Laws and Commandements; and therefore he seeketh to God for pardon: So when we sin against men, offend our neighbour and brother, by lying, adultery, murder, *&c.* Yet let us know we have to do with God; and though all men should pardon us, and connive at our sin, yet unless the Lord seal our pardon, it is not worth a button. When great men sin by adultery and murder, by oppression and cruelty, they have their clawbacks and flatterers, who will smooth and flatter them, lessen and excuse their sins, yea, say all is well done; but alas, when the Law of God is broken, unless he pardon, all the flattering and smoothing of men, is nothing worth. And let us remember, that though we pass by our sins that they are forgotten; yet they are not like our feeble bodies, which grow weaker and weaker, but they grow and increase, and in time will reach up to Heaven, and cry for vengeance against us.

Seeing all sin (to speak properly) is against God, because it is the breach of his *Use 3.*

Law, therefore it followeth, that all the punishing of sin belongs only to God; He alone is the avenger of sin: *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.* Where the Apostle sheweth, that all punishing and revenging of sin belongs to the Lord alone, because that God alone is the person which is wronged and injured, and not man (to speak properly) seeing not mans law, but Gods law is violated and broken; and if his law were not broken, no man, nor any other Creature should have the least cause to complain: and therefore, all punishing and vengeance for sin belongeth properly to God and unto such whom he shall appoint to be his Lieutenants on earth, and Ministers to stand in his stead to punish offences.

Rom. 12. 9.

And therefore, first, this sheweth, that those men do much offend, who when the Law of God is broken by wicked and ungodly men, can wink at their sin, and will not unsheath the Sword put into their hands, to the end to smite the same; but can suffer many great and horrible sins to be committed, that the Lord himself many times is fain by the Sword, Plague, Pestilence, or otherwise, to execute judgment on ungodly men, sweeping them away by heaps.

Use 4. This practice of *David* condemns the common practice of the world: If men do sin, and do some evil that is known to the world, what do they then? They presently seek to pacifie the party offended, to stay his displeasure, either by money, or by friends, or by some other means: But alas, they regard not the anger of God, whose

Majesty

Majesty is offended, and his Law transgressed. But *David* here acknowledgeth, that he had not to do with man, but with God; whose most holy and righteous Law he had broken. And although all men would willingly have pardoned the fault, yet that could not content him, till he had gotten the pardon of God sealed in the blood of Christ Jesus. So let us, though we must and may labour to be reconciled to men, yet let us look up higher to the hand of God, to be reconciled unto him, to beg pardon at his hands, and to bear one with another. Alas, what shall it boot us to get the Kings pardon for murder, adultery, theft, *&c.* if the King of Heaven pardon not, and do not forgive the same? What if we can appease the anger of man, and be in danger of the just and severe anger of the eternal and everlasting God? And therefore let us go to God, fly unto him, labour for reconciliation with him. For *Davids* sins were seen with the eye of Gods providence, and with the eye of justice, for it was Gods love to him, to send him this Prophet, to let him know that he had done wickedly, there was Gods favour: Then to tell him he would punish him, and his people, there was his justice. *David* after he had cast his eye upon *Bathsheba*, did so study and labour to get her to his will, even as a man in the Summer time, that will spend a whole day to get a butterfly, which obtained, is not worth a mans pains: So it was with *David*, nothing but sorrow came after; nor any quiet rest he found till he came to ask pardon. He lay

Nott.

as I said before, ten months in this sleep of sin, which *S^r. Bernard* said was a brother to death: But when he knew his errour, he was then glad, and said, the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; his former mirth is now turned into a River of tears; his sin stopped the grace of God, and hindred his devotion, and made him thus forget himself *David* had first nature, then grace; first here was darkness, then light; first an evening, then a day. He was in the bed of security and content, till *Nathan*, the light of grace, came and told him, *Thou art the man.* *David* at that time was more sensible of sin than grace. *Davids* greatest pleasure (as he thought) we see proves his greatest bane and sorrow: *David* all that while had a smiling face, yet had a gnawing worm within him; his Conscience, that did never cease, till it was rooted out; his sleep was no true rest, but it was like a Drunken mans sleep, which is no true repose, but full of horror and trouble: Never had he any true sleep. For his little time of pleasure, there followed a world of sorrow, which made him thus to seek to God, by prayer and tears, saying, *Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil.*

Object. If any do object, It seemeth that wrongs done to man, are no sins, and not to be repented of.

Answ. *I Answer*, That followeth not: For whether the wrong be done directly against God himself, as the Commandments of the first Table concern God; Or, indirectly against God, and directly against our Brother, as all the sins of the second Table concern our brethren;

brethren; Yet, insomuch as the Law of God is broken, either in the first or second Table. Therefore the chiefest fault and wrong is against God himself; yet we are not to think, that offences done against men are not sins, but that we are to be humbled for them; because in sinning against our Brother, we sin against God, whose Law we break; And therefore we must restore four-fold, we must be reconciled to our Brother, and seek to right wrongs done unto him. Thus much of the Person, to whom *David* confesseth: Not to any Mass-Priest, but to God alone, who alone was offended, and who alone can pardon his great fault.

Now in the second place we are to come unto the thing confessed, namely, his particular sins and impieties: *And done this evil in thy sight.* In the former words, *I have sinned*, he speaks more generally; in these words he points out his particular and special sin: *And done this evil*, adultery, and murder, *in thy sight.*

Mark what is that which most wounds *Davids* conscience, and troubles his mind; not so much the fear of shame and reproach in the World, nor yet the fear of punishment; but his sin, his vile sin, this is it that wounds him, that galls him, and doth kill his heart, and grieves his poor soul: *Against thee, against thee have I sinned*; as if he should have said, O my God, it grieves me exceedingly, and wounds my heart, that ever I should be so vile, to sin against thee my gracious and merciful God: I care not for the shame of the World, or fear of punishment

niſhment; but my ſin, my ſin is that which doth wound me, and gripeth me at the heart, and hath made that partition-wall between me and thy ſaving grace. *David* when he had committed this ſin of Adultery and Murder, and was ſo long tyed with the fetters of the fleſh, for the ſpace of ten moneths, that he ſaw not his ſin; yet God of his mercy and love, preſently diſpatches and ſends grace into his heart, and opens the eyes of his Reaſon, and cauſes him to have compunction and ſorrow of heart, in theſe words, ſaying, *I have ſinned: against thee only have I ſinned.*

So that our leſſon is this, That the child of God that truly repents, nothing more grieveth him than ſin, becauſe it is ſin, and breaks the Law of God; he is more grieved for ſin, than either for ſhame or puniſhment.

Uſe 5. Well ſeeing this is true repentance, to be grieved for ſin, and that, more than for all other things; not for fear of ſhame, or the puniſhment, ſo much as becauſe it offends a merciful God, and loving Father. Let us try our repentance; Art thou grieved more for ſin than any thing elſe, becauſe it offendeth God, and diſpleaſeth him? and couldſt thou mourn for ſin, if there were no ſhame nor puniſhment, hell nor judgement? It is a certain ſign of true repentance; but alas, thoſe that can weep for fear of ſhame, and puniſhment for ſin, many times are nothing at all grieved for ſin, in regard of God, whoſe moſt holy and perfect Law is broken: and therefore their repentance is not ſound.

We must labour for true remorse and sorrow, and not forget our sins; we must call to mind every night what we have done in the day, what we have committed, and what we have omitted; this is the way to repent.

Mark how *David* doth not only in general acknowledge his sin, but he points out his particular evil, and special sin of close adultery and murder, *I have done this evil,* (this grievous sin) *in thy sight.* *David* found the depth of Gods mercies by his confessing of his sins, for he waded through the Sea of Gods Judgments, as a Lamb through a shallow brook of water: Howsoever (saith he) I laboured to smother and hide it, yet thou wast an eye-witness, and very privy unto it. So then hence we may learn, that in true repentance, there must be an acknowledgment and confession of our particular sins and offences that we may say, *I have sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*; Lying, Stealing, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Murder, &c. We must come to particular and special sins; *David* he acknowledgeth his particular sins, of numbring the people; and of matching with the uncircumcised Nations. *David* seeing he had no way to satisfie this trespass, nor cure his wounded conscience, immediately makes his address to the Lord, saying, O Lord, give me now Coelestial comfort, such as the world cannot afford me, which I do crave on; for I know now mine own weakness and infirmity, which thou hast revealed unto me in mercy: and now I am more sensible of my own miserable estate, than ever I was before;

Doct. 5. *Acknowledgment of particular sins required.*

1 Ch. 21. Ezra 9.

fore; which I have committed in thy ſight.

And thus do the people of *Iſrael* deal in their converſion, 1 *Sam.* 12. 19. *Pray for thy ſervants to the Lord, that we die not; for we have ſinned in asking us a King, beſides all our other ſins.* So the Apoſtle *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. declareth there, that many things troubled him; yet this eſpecially, that he had been a blaſphemer, a perſecutor and oppreſſor, not worthy to be called an Apoſtle. This appeareth likewiſe by the example of the *Jews*, *Acts* 2. As alſo in the converſion of *Zacchæus*, *Luk.* 19. who having been a griper, and an oppreſſor, offered to make full reſtitution: So that we ſee it is a certain note of true repentance, to be touched with the feeling of a mans particular ſins committed againſt God.

Seeing *David*, and all the ſervants of God, when they have been truly humbled, have repented and confeſſed their particular ſins unto the Lord; this ſhews moſt men and women have not true repentance, but only the ſhadow of it. Alas, the vileſt Atheiſt in the world, a Reprobate, and one that ſhall never be ſaved, may confeſs this in a general and confuſed way, We are all ſinners; but if we will truly repent indeed, we muſt look to confeſs our particular ſins, to find them out one by one, and to acknowledge them unto the Lord with grief, ſorrow and hatred of them; but alas, moſt men and women can content themſelves in general terms to confeſs they be all offenders, although they know in particular wherein they have offended; yea, if they be examined in par-

cular,

cular, they do think they keep all the Commandements of God: Some think every ſigh and ſorrow, or a tear ſhed, is repentance, but ſo ſhould Worldlings repent; ſome think every little pang and croſs in the World for ſin is repentance, then ſhould *Pharaoh* repent; ſome think that a little weeping and lamenting for ſin is repentance, then ſhould *Cain*, *Eſau*, *Judas*, repent; ſome think that a days humbling of themſelves, or a days faſting is repentance; but ſo ſhould *Ahab* repent; ſome think that good Works, and a little Alms-deeds, upon their Death-beds is repentance; ſo ſhould every ſick man repent at his leiſure: Some think that to cry God mercy, or, the Lord have mercy upon them is repentance; ſo ſhould every fool repent; See therefore how many are deceived in their repentance; *Davids* Repentance was different from theſe, for he charged his mind, ſaying in the 119 Pſal. 59. v. *I have conſidered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.*

But we muſt uncaſe our ſelves, and uncover our particular ſins, if we would have God to cover them with the robe of Chriſts righteouſneſs; The eye cannot ſee it ſelf, it is true; if we keep and hide our ſins within us, we ſhall never ſee the danger which will befall us: So, if a ſick man come to the Phyſician, and only tell him he is ſick, and never ſhew him his particular grief, and diſeaſe that troubleth him, and the manner thereof, with all the circumſtances belonging to the ſame, he can never look to be cured: So, if we come to God, the Phyſician

of

of our ſouls, and ſay only, *We have ſinned*, we cannot aſſure our ſelves of pardon; our unknown ſins we muſt therefore confeſs generally; but our known ſins we muſt confeſs particularly, as the Prophet *David* here doth, *And done this evil*: So in the firſt book of the *Chron.* chap. 12. *I have ſinned greatly, becauſe I have done this thing*, that is, Numbring of the people. So that we ſee it ſtands us greatly in hand, even with grief of heart to confeſs our particular ſins, and to give ſentence againſt our own ſelves, and to pray as for life and death for the pardon of them, otherwiſe our repentance is, as it were, but in ſhew, and for faſhion ſake, which is never acceptable with Almighty God.

Uſe 2. Seeing then it is neceſſary, in true repentance, to ſeek out our ſpecial ſins, and particular evils and impieties: We ſee that it ſtands us in hand to be throughly acquainted with the Law of God; for by the knowledge of the Law comes the knowledge of ſin; and that man that hath the beſt inſight in the Law of God, hath the greateſt ſight of his ſin and of his miſery, and is moſt humbled, and moſt ſtirred up to ſeek to God for mercy; and they which have leaſt knowledge of the Law, know leaſt of their ſins and miſery, and are moſt proud, and leaſt humbled, neither can they truly repent.

For as a ſick man is then moſt dangerouſly ſick, when he hath no feeling of his infirmity; ſo a ſinner is then in the greateſt miſery, when he thinketh himſelf to be no ſinner: Such a one is far off from mourning and ſorrowing for ſin, from turning from

from them, and returning to God, seeing he taketh himself to be in good case, and to stand in need of no repentance. And such were the Pharisees in the dayes of Christ, whom he reproved, *Mat.* 9. 12. *The whole need not the Physician, but those that are sick, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

And done this evil in thy sight.

SIN may well be called an evil, both because it is the cause of all evil, both in soul and body; for all judgments, plagues, and punishments, be but the fruit that comes of sin; sickness, poverty, plague, pestilence, shame, wars; all judgments be the fruits of sin. 1.

Secondly, because sin doth displease God, and offendeth his divine Majesty: therefore it is called an evil of evils. 2.

Thirdly, because this evil of sin infects heaven and earth, and brings evil to the creatures of God under Heaven. 3.

Well, seeing sin is an evil, it displeaseth God, it brings all punishments, yea, eternal death in the world to come; and seeing it infects heaven and earth with the poison of it, how should we hate and abhor sin, quake at it, be afraid to commit that which is the cause of all evils. But alas, though sin be the cause of all evil, yet we see men fear not sin, they shun it not; yea, they which do fear fire and water, plague and pestilence, yet dare be doing and tampering with sin, as if there were no evil nor danger in it. But if that we be wise, let us fly sin above all other evils whatsoever; and in so doing, if *Use* 1.

we

we fly this evil of sin, we shall prevent many other judgments and evils, which are the fruits of sin.

[*In thy sight, or before thine eyes*] As if *David* should have said, O Lord my God, though I did commit adultery never so closely, and caused *Uriah* secretly to be slain, yet alas, I see all I did was manifest before thine eyes, and could not be hidden from thy sight.

Doct. 6. *Men sin before God.*

Howsoever men and women sin never so closely and secretly, yet they sin before the face of the Lord, even in his eye, and under his nose, the Lord standing by and looking upon them. Neither distance of place, nor secret corner, neither darkness of the night, nor any device and shift of man whatsoever, is able to cover our sins from Gods eyes; there is no creature which is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open before his eyes with whom we have to do. It is true indeed, it is an easie matter to blear the eyes of man, to sin so closely and so secretly, that no man shall know it; in some dark night, for to steal, lye, commit adultery; but although all men and Angels be ignorant, yet our most secret and private sins are all naked unto the Almighties eyes.

Psl. 139. *Heb.* 4. 13.

Use 2.

Oh that all men could be perswaded of this Doctrine, that we ever sin in the Lords sight; when we lye, as *Ananias* did; or steal, with *Achan*; commit adultery, with *David*, that the Lord doth see us, and his fiery eyes behold us, and the Lord even then stands at our elbows, and looks upon us. *Joseph* no sooner became a Courtier, but presently

ſently he learns to ſwear by the life of *Pharaoh*: How ſhould this be but a bleſſed means to bridle men, and to reſtrain them from many ſecret and hidden ſins? What man durſt be ſo bold and deſperate to cut a purſe when he ſees the Judges eyes ſet on him, and beholding him? And what man is ſo deſperate, that durſt ſteal, lye, commit adultery, if he know that the all-ſeeing and piercing eye of this great God doth behold him, and look upon him? This doth the Lord God tell the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, in every Epiſtle, *I know thy works*: Oh then let the remembrance of this make us watchful and wary, to look unto our ways, to live as ever in Gods preſence. Rev. 2.

Here is matter of comfort and encouragement unto the children of God; for as the Lord ſees and beholdeth all the evils and ſins of men and women, to judge and to puniſh them; all is naked to his piercing and all-ſeeing eyes: So likewiſe all our good deeds and virtues are known and ſeen of God; *I know thy works*; all thou doſt, both good and bad, I know all. Now then, the Lord doth take knowledge of all our works, and ſees them, yea, there is nothing we do, but it is manifeſt in his eyes: We know he is a bountiful God, and plenteouſly rewards all that love and fear him; yea, he will not leave a cup of cold water without a reward. O then, let us proceed and abound in good works, in knowledge, faith, repentance, patience, obedience, humility, zeal, love, *&c.* for the Lord knows, and ſees all, and will not let any one good work go unrewarded. *uſe* 2.

Now

Now follows the second part of the Verse, containing a reason why the Prophet *David* did thus acknowledge and confess his sins, and humbled himself for them; namely, that by this means he might clear the Lord of all injustice, and hard dealing in word or deed. As if he should have said, O Lord I confess, that seeing I have so grievously sinned against thee, there is no cause why I should so much as accuse thee of the least cruelty, injustice, or hard dealing with me, either in the terrible threatnings by thy servant *Nathan*, or thy righteous judgment in taking away the child conceived in Adultery; for I acknowledge that I have deserved far more grievous plagues and punishments for this my vile and grievous sin. And therefore by this my confession, I do clear thee, O Lord of all injustice and cruel dealing, and condemn my self to be worthy of far more grievous judgments and punishments for my sins, as all the world may see, and know that thou art most just in all thy threatnings denounced against sin; and most pure, and righteous in all thy judgments and fatherly chastisements.

That thou maiest be just.

THat is, that thou maiest be known just in thy works; and all the World may see and know, that there is great and just cause of thy threatnings against sin, and sinners. Now, what these speeches were, and the judgments threatned against *David*, look in the 2 Book of *Samuel*, ch. 12. v. 10. First, that the Sword should never depart from his house, but one Son should kill another.

Secondly,

Secondly, that the child conceived in adultery ſhould die. Thirdly, that his own Son ſhould rebel againſt him. And laſtly, that his Wives ſhould be abuſed, as he had abuſed another mans.

Doct. 7. *The Lord maketh good uſe of our conſcience.*

Hence mark, what uſe the Lord will make even of an accuſing and guilty conſcience. Namely, it ſhall not only be the Accuſer, Witneſs and Judge, to accuſe and condemn it ſelf, but ſhall clear the Lord of all injuſtice and hard dealing, making way unto the Lords righteous judgment. This we may clearly behold in *Judas*, *Mat.* ch. 27. who readeth his own ſentence of condemnation againſt himſelf, ſaying, *I have ſinned in betraying the innocent blood.* And for this purpoſe, the Lord hath put into the ſoul of every man, not only a knowledge, whereby we can diſcern betwixt that which is lawful and good, from that which is evil, ſo far as ſhall leave all men without excuſe: But alſo, that conſcience can make application of that knowledge in all the actions of a mans life, approving that which is good, and therein conceiveth matter of joy and comfort, or elſe condemning him for that which is evil, which will cauſe a fearful horrour in ſoul, as we ſee in *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. trembling in body, as in *Felix*, *Act.* 24. 26. or elſe fearful dreams and viſions, as in *Belſhezzar*, *Dan.* 5. And this we may clearly behold in *David*, the force of whoſe Conſcience was ſuch, as that it ſought no ſtarting holes to hide himſelf; but ſaith, *Againſt thee, againſt thee only have I ſinned, &c.* And withal doth clear the Lord of all injuſtice, and hard dealing

ling toward him, if he ſhould bring upon him and his houſe all thoſe fearful judgments which by *Nathan*, the Lords Prophet, he had threatned againſt him, 2 *Sam.* 12. Indeed ſin and ſorrow are two things, like *Jacob* and *Eſau*, one follows on the neck of another: And therefore let *Nathans* information of Gods judgments againſt *David*, work our reformation; for by our confeſſion (as *David* did) we pacifie Gods wrath, and divert his judgments from us.

Uſe 1. From this we learn, what an intollerable torment a wicked conſcience is, even a Gibbit, and a Rack to wound a man withal, and as a fearful hue and cry every where overtaking him, giving a man no reſt, neither night nor day, but every where, and in all places, is ever dragging him before the Judge. No ſooner did *Paul* diſpute of Juſtice, Temperance, and Judgment to come, but *Felix* trembled, *Acts* 24. No ſooner had *Cain* ſlain his righteous brother *Abel*, but his guilty conſcience made his countenance to fall, *Gen.* 4. What marvel is it then, if the wicked ſhould ſtifle and hinder the checks of their conſciences, being ſo fearful and terrible? But this they cannot do. Which being ſo, Oh! in the fear of God, let every one take heed of ſin, for the motions thereof may well be compared to thoſe Locuſts of the bottomleſs pit, *Rev.* 9. having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a woman; but a tail like a Scorpion, which ſtingeth to death. Oh! full little doth many a poor ſoul think, that That ſin which now ſeemeth to be as light as a feather,

ſhould

ſhould lye ſo heavy upon his ſoul in the end.

This teacheth us moreover to be very careful, that we neglect not the checks of conſcience, nor our own hearts reproving us of our ways; for time cometh a pace, and thou knoweſt not how ſoon that Conſcience of thine, which now doth check thee ſhall then judge thee; and that heart of thine, which now doth reprove thee, ſhall then torment thee: And thou by it ſhalt be accuſed and convicted, that thou haſt been a wilful chooſer of thine own deſtruction.

Again, in that doth the Prophet acknowledge, that if the Lord ſhould bring upon him all thoſe juſt judgments which he before had threatned by the Prophet *Nathan*, namely, 1 Sam. 12. 13. *That the Sword ſhould never depart from his houſe, that the child conceived in Adultery ſhould dye, that his Sons ſhould deflour his Wives, &c.* yet for all that, that *God* were moſt juſt in his judgments; We learn a ſecond point of Doctrine, that howſoever the Lord reproveth us for ſin, and ſeems to threaten and thunder out judgments, as he did againſt *Pharaoh* yet we are to confeſs that God is juſt and righteous in his threatnings; that he deals not more ſeverely with us than our ſins do deſerve: This *David* did; though he was a King, yet having ſinned, and committed evil in Gods ſight when *Nathan* came and took him up roundly for his ſins, he acknowledged God dealt juſtly with him, though he rebuked him ſharply and ſoundly; So muſt we know it is our duty, that when we are reproved for our

Doct. 2. *God is ever juſt in his judgments.*

our ſins, we judge and imagine; it is no more than we have deſerved. Old *Ely*, when *Samuel* told him, that God would deſtroy his Sons, and take the high Prieſts office from him, becauſe he did not rule and govern his Children, and correct them; he anſwered, *It is the Lord, let him do as it ſeemeth good in his eyes*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *David* did ſwim in a *Jordan* of ſweet waters, a great while, as he thought, but at length he came to the troubled waters of *Marah*, even ſorrow and tears for his ſins paſt; and by this true contrition, and hearty ſorrow of unfeigned tears he quenched Gods wrath which was denounced againſt him; and for one ounce of pleaſure which he had, and enjoyed, he had a pound of ſorrow; for he wept, and watered his couch with his tears.

In like ſort, *Mat.* 15. the *Canaaniti∫h* woman, though ſhe were called a Dog by our Saviour, yet ſhe juſtified him in his ſaying. *Truth, Lord*, I am as thou haſt ſaid; but yet admit I be a Dog, then give me that which Dogs oftentimes have, even a crumb of thy mercy. Thus did *Hezekiah*, 2 *King.* 29. when the Prophet had threatned him becauſe of his pride, in ſhewing his treaſures, he confeſſeth that God was juſt, and might have dealt yet more rigorouſly with him, ſaying, *The word of the Lord is good.* Theſe examples do ſhew, what is the nature of true penitents; namely, to acknowledge that which from Gods Word is moſt ſeverely and ſharply ſpoken, to be juſt and true. Whereas on the contrary, we ſhall ſee Hypocrites ready to cenſure God, to deal too

ſeverely

ſeverely with them, as we may read, *Luk.* 12. how that the wicked, at the laſt, will ſeem to plead their cauſe with God, ſaying, *Lord haſt thou not preached in our ſtreets, and have we not eat and drank in thy company?* Seeming thereby, to have ſuch an intereſt in Chriſt, as that he ſhould deal unjuſtly with them to condemn them. The like we may ſee in *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. *My ſin*, ſaith he, that is, my puniſhment, *is greater than can I bear.* So that we ſee, that as the righteous man acknowledgeth God to be juſt in all things, ſo the wicked man dares charge God to his face, that he is unjuſt if he puniſh ſin ſeverely.

This ſheweth, of what ſpirit thoſe men be of, who, when they be ſharply reproved for their ſins, as ſwearing, drunkenneſs, whoredom, covetouſneſs, *&c.* they begin to murmur and grudg, to find fault with the Miniſters of God, that they be too hot, and too earneſt, too ſharp and ſevere; they would be more mildly dealt withal: They cannot abide theſe hot fellows, that be all of the Spirit, they would be handled nicely and gently. But we ſee, *David*, a King acknowledgeth God to be juſt, and to deal juſtly with him. But theſe men are like unto *Ahab*, he hated *Micajah*; and why? becauſe he never propheſied good unto him, but ever told him of Gods judgments; and therefore he could not away with him: But let us know, that it is a bad property, and a ſign of a moſt lewd and graceleſs heart, *Thou hatſt to be reformed.* The vileſt Atheiſt in the World, Will be content to hear the Goſpel; *Uſe* 1. Pſ. 50. 5.

Is. 58. 1. spel; but let us know, that we must be content to hear of Gods judgments. *Herod* Mat. 6. 10. could be content to hear *John Baptist* gladly, until he came for to touch his hainous sin, which was a sign he had a naughty heart. But *David* could wish the righteous Ps. 141. might smite him friendly; and reprove him: for such smiting should be good for him.

Use 2. *Faithful Ministers a token of Gods love.* Let us learn by *Davids* example, quietly and patiently to hear of our sins, and to hear Gods judgments denounced against them: And let us deem it a singlar favour of God, if the Lord send some Godly *Nathan* to tell us of our sins, and to thunder out Gods judgments against them; it is a sign the Lord loveth us, and would not have us to perish. And therefore let us be so far from murmuring or disliking the Lords Ministers, for telling us of our sins, that we should rather love them, and like them: Yea, *David* loveth *Nathan* above all other men, because that he was a means to reclaim him, and bring him home again by true repentance. And so it is with all Gods children, that those faithful Ministers of the World, which have been the means to humble them, and cast them down from their sins, of all other they love them, and make much of them. *David* did not put off his Psal. 142. repentance, or delay it, saying, I will hear of it some other time, as King *Agrippa* did; no, he knew by Gods grace, that the present occasion was the fittest opportunity for a sinner to repent, not to put it off till the morrow; for we have no time which we can

can call our own, but this minute, this preſent time: For who knoweth whether he ſhall ſee the next Sun-riſing, yea, or no?

Uſe 3. God ſpeaketh by his Miniſters.

Seeing, when *Nathan* reproved *David*, he acknowledgeth it to be the Lords rebuking of him: It muſt admoniſh all men to liſten unto the word of God in the mouth of his Miniſters, as though the Lord himſelf ſhould ſpeak unto them; for they ſtand in his ſtead, and whatſoever they ſpeak in the name of the Lord, it is as much as if the Lord himſelf ſhould ſpeak from Heaven: And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *He that heareth you, heareth me; And he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; And he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* And therefore, let us take to heart the judgment God threatneth by his Miniſters. Let us make a good uſe of them; and let us aſſure our ſelves, that unleſs we do repent, they will ſeize upon us; and therefore let all ungodly men take heed how they revile Gods faithful Miniſters, when they will deal ſoundly and roundly, ſincerely and ſharply, with them for ſin: Thou ſtriveſt not with man, but with God.

Luke 16.

And pure when thou judgeſt.

THat is, that thou maieſt be known to be pure, and free from all cruelty and injuſtice in thy judgments; when thou doſt chaſten man for ſin. We muſt needs acknowledge that thou art juſt, and doſt never deal ſo hardly with us as we deſerve.

For himſelf he confeſſeth, that God is moſt juſt: That howſoever the Lord might bring upon him all thoſe heavy judgments

which he had threatned by his holy Prophet againſt him, *viz.* That evil ſhould be raiſed againſt him out of his own houſe. That the ſword ſhould be ſent againſt it. That his wives ſhould be openly defiled. That the child born in adultery ſhould die. Yet, although all thoſe things ſhould come upon him and his houſe, the Lord ſhould ſtill be free from cruelty and injuſtice.

Uſe 1. By this example of *David* we may learn to free the Lord from all cruel, hard and unjuſt dealing: That although the Lord bring upon us many and grievous judgments, ſickneſs, poverty, impriſonment, plague, famine, ſword, peſtilence, *&c.* yet let us take it ſo to heart, that ever we do acknowledge God is free from all cruel and unjuſt dealing. A moſt lively example of this we have in the people of the Jews, whom the Lord had grievouſly afflicted for the contempt of his Word, and deſpiſing the Prophet, ſent them into great captivity: Now being there, they do not complain of any unjuſt dealing of God towards them; but confeſs rather, *That it was of his endleſs mercy, that they were not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not.* The like example we have in *Job*, who never charged God of any unjuſt dealing. And to the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the Church, *Mic.* 7. 9. *I will bear the wrath of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.*

Dan. 9. 5, 6, 7.

Lam. 3. 22.

Job 1. 22.

Uſe 1. Hence we are taught, whatſoever croſs or judgment the Lord ſhall lay upon us, to undergo the ſame without murmuring or repining againſt God; for in all theſe things God is moſt righteous, and layeth nothing on

on us, which we have not deſerved. Let us therefore learn, with *David* to be dumb and ſilent under the hand of God, whatſoever we ſuffer; becaule God hath done it, and we have deſerved it. But alas, how far is this from thoſe men, who, when they are croſſed, are ready to break into curſing and ſwearing, *&c.* or at leaſt fret and repine againſt God, as if he had done them wrong in puniſhing them.

Uſe 2. This condemns that great impatiency of many a one, that when the Lord doth exerciſe them by ſickneſs, by poverty, by croſſes in wife or children, *&c.* are ready to murmur and complain, that the Lord dealeth hardly with them, ſo that they dare reaſon and diſpute with God. This was *Jobs* caſe in his extremity, he forgot himſelf, and ſpake fooliſhly. Nay, rather let us, with *David*, confeſs and acknowledge, that it is the juſt hand of God, and that he doth us no wrong, although he ſend many and long afflictions upon us: Let us confeſs, it is his mercy that he ſends no more; yea, let us acknowledge, that we are worthy ten thouſand times to periſh for our ſins, and to be damned eternally. And if the Lord ſhould for evermore condemn us, yet he ſhould be juſt.

Job 13. 15. *Dan.* 9.

Uſe 3. This condemns all thoſe proud ſpirits, who dare charge the Lord of great cruelty and hardneſs if he ſhould reject the greateſt part of Mankind, and damn them for their ſins, they think it ſtands not with Gods mercy ſo to do; but as the Apoſtle *Paul*, in the eleventh Chapter to the *Romans* ſaith, *What*

Note.

art thou, O man, that dareſt diſpute with God? Yea, it is therefore juſt becauſe God willeth it; for his Will is the rule of Juſtice: And therefore any thing is juſt becauſe he wills it; and therefore let us not only in our own particular croſſes and calamities, acknowledge God to be juſt, but alſo in the matter of reprobation, and rejection, let us acknowledge Almighty God to be moſt juſt and righteous: *Let God be true, and every man a liar.*

Uſe 4. Seeing the Lord is pure and juſt, free from all cruel and hard dealing, in word or deed: let us labour to be like unto him; let us be juſt in our word, and juſt in our deed, ſhun all unjuſt, cruel and mercileſs dealing to our brethren; take heed of lying, deceiving and unjuſt, and cruel dealing in buying and ſelling. Let us imitate God our Heavenly Father; *be ye Holy as he is Holy*; Juſt, Righteous, Pure, as he is Pure. For if we ſhall be either unjuſt, unrighteous, impure, given to cruelty, hard and mercileſs dealing, we ſhall be moſt unlike to God and be moſt like the Devil, who is a liar, and the father of lies; a murderer, and a cruel blood-ſhedder from the beginning.

VERSE

VERSE V.

Behold I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

IN this Verſe, and the next that followeth, the Prophet amplifieth the Confeſſion of his ſin. Firſt, from the Original and fountain of the ſame: Namely, his natural ſin, wherein he was conceived and born. Secondly, from the moſt holy and pure Nature, in which God hath created him; againſt which he ſets his own corrupt and defiled Nature. Thirdly, by that knowledge wherewith the Lord hath indued him, becauſe God had poured into his heart, and made known unto him his Will by his Word, more then to many others; and made him capable of the heavenly and ſaving Knowledge of his Will.

David confeſſeth his original ſin, as the fountain of all ſins.

Behold.

THis word doth not always note ſome ſtrange thing, but likewiſe ſometimes pointeth out ſome ſpecial thing worthy to be marked, and that ought to be learned of all men: For I have obſerved it to be repeated in the Sacred Scriptures, at the leaſt two hundred ſeveral times from the Alpha of *Geneſis*, to the Omega of the *Revelations*. *Behold*, it is a word of comfort, and imports much good to the hearers; it is like a Beacon ſet on fire upon a Hill, that gives a warning when it is kindled, to all that behold it, to look about them: It is a word of Conſolation; for the Angels ſaid, *Behold fear not,*

The meaning of the Word.

for I bring you glad tidings of peace: Behold this is a day of great joy to all people.

I was born in iniquity.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid; O Lord, I confeſs, that I was not only defiled with ſin, when I committed that foul ſin of Adultery, but even ſo ſoon as ever I came into the World, and ſaw the light of the Sun, I was polluted with ſin from the top to the toe,

And in ſin hath my Mother conceived me.

THat is, not only when I firſt came into the world, but even ſo ſoon as I was incloſed, and conceived in my Mothers womb, even then I was ſtained, both in ſoul and body, with ſin: So that the Prophet *David* ſpeaketh here of that Original ſin wherein he was both bred and born, and wherein he was defiled both in ſoul and body; And this original ſin it was the root and ſpawn of his other ſins.

Behold.

The neceſſity of this doctrine of original ſin.

THis word ſheweth, that this Doctrine of Original ſin is a point neceſſary to be known and learned of Men, and ſuch a point as none ſhould be ignorant of: becauſe a man can never throughly know his own miſery, till he come to know even his Original ſin, wherein he was both bred and born; to know, that by Nature even ſo ſoon as we are born, yea, conceived in the womb, we be but a lump and maſs of ſin, and by nature the Children of Wrath, by the diſobedience of our firſt Parents, *Adam* and *Eve*.

Eph. 2. 2.

And

And this is true of all, (without exception) high and low, rich and poor, noble or simple; for thus doth *David* confeſs himſelf, *I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.* If in ſin, then in Gods wrath, and in danger of eternal condemnation. If any ask, how can this be? I anſwer, Every man is guilty of *Adams* great ſin, and alſo tainted originally with all corruption, with a proneneſs unto all iniquity. Therefore it followeth, in equity and juſtice, that every man is born under the wrath and curſe of God.

And yet conſider, how few obſerve this point of Doctrine concerning Original ſin, not one of a hundred. O then, let us labour to ſee in what a bleſſed eſtate we are at firſt created; and withal, how we be defiled and ſtained by the fall of *Adam*, and now by nature are but a very lump of ſin and pollution, that ſo we may labour to recover that former eſtate again, by Water and the Spirit, which is the Regeneration. *Gen.* 8. 12. *Job* 41. 4. *Joh.* 3. 6.

Seeing *David* thus repented of his actual ſin of adultery and murder, and doth come to find out the root and ground of it, his Original ſin, and corruption of Nature: We learn, That a man doth never truly repent of any one crime, unleſs withal he come to find out other ſins whereof he is guilty; yea, till he can deſcend to the very fountain and mother ſin: Namely, corruption of nature and original ſin; that is that pollution of ſoul and body, wherein we are bred and born. For here, *David* doth not ſpeak of ſome one or two ſins, but now he confeſſeth, that he

Doct. 1. *What need we have to look into our nature.*

Eph. 2. *Joh.* 3. 6.

he is even a maſs of corruption, and a lump of all uncleanneſs, and from top to toe is defiled with ſin. Even ſo no man doth truly repent till he can acknowledg that he is born in ſin; yea, as it were a lump and maſs of all uncleanneſs; and every particular ſin we fall into, ſhould put us in mind of this natural pollution; that we are nothing elſe but a very lump of ſin, and that by nature there is in us nothing that good is, but ſin and corruption.

And as it was in *David*, when he repented of his adultery, he comes to other ſins, even to the root and ſpawn of all: So it is in every true repentant ſinner he that is wounded for one ſin, and repents of that truly, he repents of all, he is humbled for all his ſins, and in the end comes with *David*, to ſee that he is but a lump of ſin, and maſs of all pollution: and indeed a true converſion of a ſinner muſt begin in the heart, as it did with *David*: It was not forced from *David* to confeſs his ſins, for a forced confeſſion is not ſo good to leave ſin when we cannot commit it longer; no, *David* ſaid, *Behold I was born in ſin.*

Doct. 5. *By nature no man is born the child of God.* *Eph.* 1. 23. *Gen.* 8. *Joh.* 3. 6. *Joh.* 10. *Gen.* 5. 3.

Then *David* doth confeſs here, that he was even conceived in ſin; that is, ſo ſoon as ever he was incloſed in his mothers womb, he was polluted with ſin and natural corruption: We ſee, that no man by nature is born the Child of God, but by nature we are all the children of wrath; yea, we are by nature a lump of ſin, a maſs of all uncleanneſs and corruption: Our minds are ful of blindneſs, our will of diſobedience, and our affections full of naughtineſs and untowardneſs;

neſs; yea, by Original ſin we are guilty of the wrath of God, and in danger of hell and damnation, worthy to periſh for ever.

Yea, by nature there is no difference between the elect and the Reprobate neither in outward or inward diſpoſition, until God make it by grace. *Paul*, as bloody a perſecutor as ever was *Domitian*, or *Julian*; *Zacheus*, as unconſcionable and covetous a Worldling, as was that rich Glutton, damned in Hell, *Luk.* 6. and *Luk.* 19. All men are alike by nature, before that grace makes a difference.

Seeing all men by nature are the children of wrath, and heirs of Gods vengeance, in danger to be damned, and worthy to periſh eternally in Hell fire for ever: Then he that dyeth in the ſtate of nature, cannot be ſaved, and come to Life eternal; but living and dying a natural man muſt needs be damned and dye eternally. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* Again, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* And therefore, ſo long as we continue in the ſtate of nature, being conceived and born in ſin we are in a moſt miſerable and deſperate eſtate. *Uſe* 1. Joh. 3. Luk. 13. 5.

For the poyſon of our nature is the ſame in us, that it is in the wicked and by nature we are prone to all manner of ſin: And howſoever, by the ſpecial mercy of God we have eſcaped many horrible and grievous ſins which we find that the wicked oft have fallen into; it is not, for that we are of a purer nature than they; (for it is alike with the Reprobate) but becauſe the poyſoned

corruption thereof hath not yet discovered it self in us, which we have just cause every day to fear.

Oh then, let us labour to get out of this cursed state of nature, and get into the state of grace, to be born anew, to become new Creatures in Christ Jesus to repent, to seek for Jesus Christ for mercy; for if we live and dye in the state of Nature, it is impossible we should be saved: And therefore, the estate of all carnal men and women, which are meerly natural, howsoever civil, and honest, are in a fearful estate and condition; for all this while they do nothing but sin: All the actions of a natural man be so many sins unto him; as Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacraments, and the like; for before any of these sacrifices can be accepted of God, their persons must first be approved.

Gen. 4.

Use 2. Seeing that all of us be conceived in sin, and stained with Original uncleanness, and therefore are not only subject to the curse of God, but even polluted in soul and body, blind in our minds, rebellious in our wills and affections: Then those men who stand upon their own wit and wisedom, and care not for the word of God preached, shew that they be in a miserable case: All the knowledge, wit and strength of Nature, cannot bring a man to Heaven, and to Life eternal: And the reason is, *The natural man receiveth not the things that are of God.* Again, *when as the world could not know God in the wisdom of God, it pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe:*

1 *Cor.* 1. 10.
1 *Cor.* 3.
Rom. 8. 3.
Gen. 8. 11.

lieve: And therefore, let us renounce our ſelves, our natural wiſdom, ſtrength, and goodneſs, and become fools in our ſelves, that we may be wiſe in God; abhor our ſelves, and our own goodneſs, and labour to be found righteous in Chriſts Righteouſneſs. *Paul* confeſſeth, ſaying, *In me there dwelleth no good thing*: We cannot think a good thought, much leſs do any good, till we be illuminated, by the Word and Spirit, enlightned and ſanctified. *Rom.* 7.7.

Then we may perceive that the Doctrine of the Papiſts, That man hath natural free-will, and by virtue of that can do ſome good to pleaſe God, and can keep the Law, and merit Life eternal, that is moſt falſe; for all men be conceived in iniquity, ſtark dead in tranſgreſſions, have no power to do good things, but are prone to all evil and corruption: For a man hath no free-will in any thing that is good, and leadeth to Life eternal, but all to evil. *Uſe* 3.

And in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

HErein we may note the greatneſs of *Adams* fall, and the ſin of our firſt Parents, who did not only bring the curſe of God upon themſelves, but upon all their poſterity; and did not only defile themſelves, but all that ſhould come of them. For *Adam* did not fall as a private man, but as the main root and ſtock of all mankind; and we all fell in him, becauſe we were all in his loins. And therefore, ſeeing ſuch is the greatneſs of *Adams* fall, we ought to be humbled for it, and daily to bewail it; becauſe if he had not tranſgreſſed, then we ſhould

ſhould not have been conceived in ſin, nor loſt the image of God, wherein we were at firſt created in holineſs and righteouſneſs; And withal we muſt labour to be renewed daily, and to have the image of Almighty God reſtored, by dying to ſin, and living to righteouſneſs; that we may be holy as God is holy, and righteous as God is righteous. God is unchangeable, and yet our ſins can change him; yea, from being our friend, to be our enemy. Man, by the power of ſin, can turn good into evil, and light into darkneſs; and man falling into ſin, doth caſt himſelf into the pit of deſtruction. Let us take notice, that puniſhments are proportioned and provided for men, according to the meaſure of grace which was given them by God at firſt.

Doct. 7. *Godly Parents beget ſinful children.*

We ſee, that our natural Parents, though they be holy, and ſuch as believe, yet they beget children in ſin and uncleanneſs, and do convey original ſin unto their children; they do warm them with unclean blood, and ſo by that means do make them children of wrath, and heirs of Gods anger, and in the ſtate of damnation. For believing Parents beget not believing children, but children like unto themſelves, as they be ſinful men and women: *Adam begat a child in his own likeneſs*; that is, a ſinful man like unto himſelf.

Gen. 5. 3.

Now we know that Gods Image was defaced in *Adam* he begat a Son, therefore corrupt, according to his own corrupt Image; as *Job* ſpeaketh, *Job* 14. *Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean?* And this is the reaſon, *Gen.* 4. 3. That this corrupt

rupt nature of *Cain* led him to that, for the which he had no Example. And this is true of all men elſe, though they might never ſee any thing that were evil, yet of themſelves, and of their own diſpoſitions they would do evil, being by nature, men haled thereunto.

Well, ſeeing Parents now, by the fall of *Adam*, get ſinful children, and they be bred and born in ſin, and they be the means to beget them, and to bring them into the World, and to convey Original ſin unto them, and make them in a fearful and damnable eſtate: O how ſhould Parents labour to bring them out of the ſtate of nature and damnation, into grace and ſalvation? If thou ſhouldeſt do any thing to bring thy child into danger of death, how would it grieve thee, that thou by thy folly ſhouldſt bring thy child to untimely death! How much more to bring them in danger of eternal Death? And therefore pity thy poor child, ſeek to make him the child of God; repent thy ſelf, pray for him, admoniſh him, bring him to hear the Word, and publick means; call upon him to repent, to beg the pardon of his ſin, to fear God; give him good example, leſt for want of this thou doſt thruſt his poor ſoul into Hell: O how can Parents be too careful for their children, ſeeing they have been the means to bring them into this woful eſtate!

Uſe 3. Parents duty.

Note.

Seeing that *David* doth acknowledge his natural ſin and corruption, for this end, even to aggravate the grievouſneſs of his ſin, and not to leſſen it, or excuſe himſelf, but rather

Uſe 2.

ther to confeſs, that he was nothing elſe but a maſs of ſin and all pollution: This ſhews of what ſpirit thoſe prophane beaſts be, who being told of their filthy ſins, of adultery, whoredom and uncleanneſs, by and by they anſwer, Why, what ſhould we do? we are but fleſh and blood, and we ſee it is in our nature to ſin, and ſo think by one ſin to excuſe another, and by one debt to pay another. Tell men of their unbridled and unruly affection, covetouſneſs, anger, *&c.* and what is their anſwer? It is their nature to do ſo; which is all one, as to go about to pay one debt with another: And thus they go about to hide their ſins. We ſee *David* ſought no ſuch ſtarting holes, but rather confeſſeth he is a maſs of ſin, and that he is every way worthy to periſh for his ſin, and in danger to be damned: And therefore, let us take heed that we do not ſo confeſs our natural corruption, as to make it a bouſter to uphold us in our ſins; but rather to be humbled for it, that our nature is ſo miſerably polluted, and labour to have it reformed.

Vſe 3. And laſt of all, this may ſerve to reprove the extream folly of thoſe that ſtand ſo much upon their pedigree, as though they were not made of common mould, but even from the conſideration of the greatneſs of their Parentage bear themſelves aloof, thinking none of their equal, as though true Nobility ſtood in this that man deſcends of man.

Vſe 4. But let not ſuch ſtand ſo much upon the honour and greatneſs of their birth, or the antiquity of their Predeceſſors, as though in theſe

these things alone they were happy. But let them labour withal, to be the Sons of God by regeneration: This is indeed the ornament of blood, and the finest flower in their Garland. And though a man be never so noble, or great in estate, yet if he be not a repentant sinner, and such a one that is truly humbled before God, he is most base and vile, and his Nobility stinks in the Nostrils of God.

VERSE VI.

Behold thou lovest truth in the inward affection, therefore hast thou taught me wisedom in the secret of my heart.

David, in the former Verse had set out the grievousness of his sin, and by this that he was even conceived in sin, and even from the cradle was worthy to perish and to be damned. In this sixth Verse the Prophet *David* proceeds to set out the grievousness of his sin by another argument, taken from the most pure nature of Almighty God, who being most just and holy, and most pure, can delight in nothing but in that which is pure and holy: But he confesseth, that by his sins he had defiled himself both in soul and body, so as he was not worthy to appear in the presence of Almighty God.

Behold.

AS if he should have said, O Lord my God, thou art a most holy, and most just God, and canst abide no unclean thing. But

The meaning of the words.

But I, even *David*, once a creature after thine own heart, ſanctified by thy holy Spirit, have ſpoiled all, and with filthy uncleanneſs and adultery, as alſo murder, and ſhedding of guiltleſs blood, have defiled and ſtained my ſelf, both in body and ſoul: So as I am now clean out of order, and ſo foul that I am not worthy to come into thy preſence; ſo as inſtead of that inward purity and ſincerity, and that uprightneſs both in ſoul and body, I have brought out moſt ugly and curſed fruits of ſin and uncleanneſs. Thus doth he ſtill lay open his miſery, and aggravate his ſin before the Lord.

Doct. 1. *True knowledg of God worketh true humility.*

Seeing that *David* doth aggravate his ſin by weighing the moſt pure and holy nature of God that can abide no iniquity, or uncleanneſs; From hence we learn, that a man or woman ſhall never ſufficiently enough ſee themſelves, and their own miſery, till ſuch time as they do look up unto the moſt holy and pure nature of God. All the while we meaſure our ſelves by our ſelves, look upon our own goodneſs, wiſdom, knowledge, uprightneſs, we think highly of our ſelves; but if we once lift up our eyes to the moſt holy and moſt pure nature of God, and withal conſider how we are ſwerved from it, and are defiled with ſin; O then we begin to pull down our Peacocks feathers, and to humble our ſelves in the ſight of God. *Job* had a long time ſtood upon his own goodneſs and virtues, but after the Lord opened his eyes, to ſee the moſt pure and holy Nature of God, and his own vileneſs he cried out, *O Lord, thou, I know, canſt do all things;*

Job 42. 1, 2.

things; no thought is hid from thee: I have ſpoken things I know not. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye ſeeth thee, Therefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes. *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Before the Commandement came, I was alive*, Rom. 7. A jolly fellow, thought well of himſelf; but when the commandement came, and he had got the knowledg of God, namely, that he was a holy and juſt God, then he was dead. The people of *Iſrael* thought it an eaſie matter to ſerve the Lord, and were very forward, but *Joſhua* adviſeth them to take heed, for ſaith he, *The Lord is a holy God, a jealous God, and will not pardon your ſins and iniquities.* So that by all theſe it appeareth, that the knowledge of God, as he is a holy, pure, and righteous God, is a ſpecial means to humble us, and to make us know our ſelves, and our miſery; and therefore doth the Prophet *David* prefix before it this note of attention, *Behold*, mark, conſider it well. *Joſh.* 13. 10.

Uſe 1. What is the reaſon, that ſinful and miſerable men dare be ſo bold to ſtand upon their own goodneſs and worthineſs, when they come into Gods preſence, like the proud Phariſee? becauſe they do not conſider with whom they have to deal, with God who is moſt pure, and loveth purity, and can abide no impurity. Oh if men would look up unto the holy and moſt pure nature of God, it would be a ſpecial means to humble them, and to pluck down their pride; Then they would ſee and acknowledge that they are but duſt and aſhes, as *Abraham*, pleading with *Lu.* 18. 2. *Gen.* 17.

with God, confeſſeth and humbles himſelf: Then they would come with more reverence and fear, and confeſs themſelves vile and miſerable creatures. O then let us think upon this, with *David*, *Job*, *Abraham*, when we come into Gods preſence, to humble us, that we may come with great preparation, and look unto our feet and affections, that we may remember we come not into the preſence of an earthly King, but of the ever-living God, as that we thereby be brought not to conceive too well of our ſelves, as many men do in theſe days.

Thou loveſt truth in the inward affection.

HEnce mark, that a ſound, upright and ſincere heart, is that the Lord loveth well, and taketh delight in, and without this all that we do is loathſome and abominable. This honeſt and good heart our Saviour Chriſt commendeth in *Nathaniel*; *Behold a true Iſraelite, in whom is no guile*: This true *Iſraelite*, this upright heart, the Lord loveth it, and the Lord delighteth in it: *And the good ground are thoſe which with an honeſt and good heart, hear the Word, and bring forth fruit with patience.* *Lu.* 8. 15.

Uſe 1. This ſerveth to cut the comb of all hypocrites and diſſemblers, who think God will be pleaſed with outward ſhews and colours, although they be rotten at the Core, like Apples of *Sodom*: The Lord ſheweth his diſlike of theſe naughty and diſſembling wretches: *This people come near me with their lips, and honour me with their mouths, but their hearts are far from me*: So the Lord telleth the Jews, *You did but diſſemble with him in* *Jer.* 52. 20.

your

your hearts, when you ſent me unto the Lord to pray for you, and that you would do his will and his Word, but now you will do nothing, but clean contrary, even after your own luſt. And amongſt us in theſe days, there are many hypocrites and diſſemblers, painted tombs, gay without, making fair ſhews, and goodly colours, but their hearts are rotten to the Core; they are but counterfeit Chriſtians, and God abhorreth them, and hath no liking of them: For as he loveth truth and ſoundneſs of heart, ſo he hateth and abhorreth all hypocriſie. Let all ſuch look upon the fearful hand of the Lord on *Ananias* and *Saphira*, who, becauſe they would ſeem to be religious, and ſomewhat forward to ſell their Lands, and give to the poor; becauſe their hearts were not ſound, and upright, but they diſſembled; therefore the Lord ſmote them both dead. And to ſhew how the Lord hateth hypocrities, and diſſemblers, Chriſt in the 24 of *Matthew*, and v. 51. ſaith, *All vile ſinners ſhall have their portion with Hypocrites*; becauſe of all men, hypocrites ſhall have the greateſt meaſure of torment and condemnation. *Acts 5.*

Uſe 2. Seeing that the Lord loveth and delighteth in truth and ſincerity of the mind and affection, let us be careful all our days to get a ſound and upright heart, void of all hypocriſie and diſſimulation, ſo as in all things we find our hearts ſound and ſincere, in all our duties, in the worſhip of God, in ſpeaking, hearing, praying; yea, in all things. Now this uprightneſs and ſoundneſs of the heart will appear, as by many other things;

ſo

so by this, when a man is as careful to please God, and to shun sin in private as in publick, in secret as abroad, and making conscience of sin, although no man nor Angel could accuse him of it; then it is a sign his heart is sound and upright. But if thou find that in secret thou darest commit those sins which thou would'st be loath to commit abroad in the sight and view of others; it is a sign, thy heart is not upright with God. Oh then, let us labour to get this honest and good heart, this soundness and sincerity of affections; that is, *Truth in the inward affections*, which will bring peace unto our souls, and make all we do acceptable, when our heart is purified by faith. When the Lord describes a blessed man, he shews, who it is, *Even in whose Spirit there is no guile.* And whatsoever a man doth, though never so excellent and glorious in the eyes of man, though a man could even speak with the tongue of men and Angels, and could pray never so excellently for words or matter; yet if the heart be not sound, but hollow, and full of Hypocrisie, all is not worth a button; whereas, if the heart be sincere and sound, purified by Faith in Christ Jesus, though men have many wants and weaknesses, the Lord God regardeth the uprightness and truth of the heart.

Act. 1. 5, 9.

Psal. 3. 2.

Doct. 2. *A sanctified heart a great blessing of God.*

Last of all, observe hence what a singular favour and grace of God it is, when we have sound and sanctified hearts, sincere and upright with God, void of hypocrisie and dissimulation. It is that the Lord so highly esteems of, that he wished most earnestly for

for it, *Deut.* 5. 2, 9. *Oh that there were this heart in them.* And the Prophet *David* ſaith here, that the Lord doth love truth in the *inward affection*: And again, *Pro.* 11. 28. *They that be of a froward heart, are abominable to the Lord; but they that be upright in heart, are his delight.* This upright heart is none but thoſe that be truly regenerate which have truly repented of their faults, and believe in Chriſt Jeſus, *Act.* 15. 9. Becauſe faith alone doth purifie the heart; and therefore thoſe that do not believe and repent, cannot have this pure heart; and it is ſuch an heart as hath no purpoſe to live in any known ſin whatſoever, but a deſire and careful endeavour to perform obedience to every one of the Commandments.

Well ſeeing the Lord God doth ſo highly commend an honeſt heart, and ſo earneſtly deſireth and wiſheth it: Oh how ſhould we labour for it, to have a ſound heart, purified by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, to carry no purpoſe to ſin in any thing, but in all things to pleaſe him, and to do his will, and therefore, again, I ſay, let us look to our hearts, that they be found, and that, as we profeſs our ſelves to be Chriſtians in ſhew, ſo we may approve our ſelves Chriſtians in the ſight of God: That he may approve of us, in that we have ſound hearts to walk with our God, and a purpoſe in all things to do his will, *Job* 1. 14. It is no ſmall commendation that Chriſt gives to *Nathaniel*, that he was a true *Iſraelite*, in whom was no guile. And nothing indeed doth more diſtinguiſh a true Chri-

Chriſtian from a counterfeit, than this truth and ſincerity of heart. *Eſau. Gen.* 27. can mourn like *Hezekiah*; and *Ahab* can put on ſack-cloath, 1 *Reg.* 21. and *Saul* as well as *David* can ſay, *I have ſinned.* But their hearts were full of hypocriſie, far from ſincerity before God.

Doct 3. *Sin is but a lying Vanity.*

Seeing God loveth truth in the inward affection, we learn, Where truth doth not reign, ſin doth reign, which is but a lying vanity: And all thoſe that have been in love with it, in the end have found the ſame to be true. *Achan*, through his covetous deſire thought to enrich himſelf by the wedg of Gold, and the *Babyloniſh* garment which he had purloined, contrary to the Commandement of God, but it fell out to his own deſtruction. *Ahab* roſe up, and took poſſeſſion of *Naboths* Vineyard, but withal, he purchaſed the wrath of God, the deſtruction of himſelf, and the ruin of his whole houſe. The like may be ſaid of *Judas*, who through his covetous deſire was led to betray his Maſter; yet how he digeſted the ſame in the end, the Evangeliſt declare; when he ſaw that Chriſt was condemned, he brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the high-prieſt, and Elders, ſaying, *I have ſinned in betraying the innocent blood.* And this ſhall men one day be ſure to find, that the periſhing pleaſures of ſin ſhall have ſorrow in the end. That if they have no truth in the inward affection of the heart, there muſt needs reign ſin; and ſin is a lying vanity, and will deceive in the end.

Joſh. 7. 26

1 *Kin.* 21.

Mat. 27. 4

In

Indeed all ſin to a natural man is delightful and pleaſant, he findeth it ſweet to his taſte; but it is as ſweet-meat that harh poyſon mingled with it: That howſoever it is ſweet in the taſte, yet in the end it bringeth death. So it is with ſin, it doth delight in the committing thereof, but in the end threatneth the deſtruction of the whole man. *Heb.* 3. 3.

Uſe 1. Here then we may ſee the woful fruit of ſin; which natural men make their chiefeſt happineſs and felicity. They may indeed delight for a time, and pleaſe the carnal deſires of natural men: but oh, alas! they bring an heavy account and reckoning in the end. So that we may ſay to all natural and carnal men, whoſe portion is in this life, as *Abner* ſaid in another caſe; *Knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end?* This we may ſee in *Cain*, *Eſau*, in *Ahab*, *Judas*, &c. that having taſted of the bread of deceit, have had their *mouths filled with gravel in the end.* For the motions of ſin are like thoſe Locuſts of the bottomleſs pit; having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a woman, but a tail like a Scorpion, which ſtingeth to death. 2 *Sam.* 2. 26. *Prov.* 9.

Uſe 2. We learn hence, that it muſt be the Chriſtian practice of a godly man; Namely, to walk plainly and ſincerely, to be a true *Iſraelite* indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is that which *Solomon* teacheth: *He that walketh uprightly, walketh boldly; but he that perverteth his ways ſhall be known.* Oh it is a gracious thing for a man in all things to labour to keep faith and a good conſcience; ſuch a man may aſſure himſelf that the Lord loveth *Pro.* 10. 9.

loveth him: *For he loveth truth in the inward affection:* But such as commit wickedness without care or conscience, shall be sure to feel the smart in the end.

Therefore hast thou taught me wisdom in the secret of my heart.

David's sin haineus and why?

THe Prophet *David*, in this last place, aggravateth his sin by that knowledge which God in mercy had bestowed upon him: Namely, that God had taught him heavenly wisdom by the Law of God, whereby he knew very well what God required at his hands, and how he ought to serve and worship God; Nay, by his Spirit he had taught him wisdom in the secret of his heart, in a special manner revealing his will unto him, and therefore he confesseth, that his sin was the more hainous and grievous: For if he had never been sanctified, nor truly called, if he had been ignorant and blind in the word of God, though it could not excuse him, yet his sin had not been so great: But seeing he who had made so good proceeding in the service and worship of God, who had taught others, who was so enlightned by the Spirit, and being taught in a special manner, against knowledg, against conscience, and so foully sinned against God; this highly increaseth and aggravateth his sin.

Because God had taught him wisdom secretly.

Doct. 4. *A fearful thing to sin against knowledg.*

Hence then learn, that it is a fearful and very dangerous sin for any man or woman to sin against the known truth of the Word and Law of God, against knowledge and conscience, when as we have not only known the will and word of God, but believed it, been

been enlightned by the Spirit, and being taught of God in our inward affections, then againſt all theſe means to ſin, and to commit iniquity againſt knowledge and conſcience, it is a moſt dangerous thing; this may here appear in *David*, who was grievouſly wounded for this ſin above all other, and felt the ſmart of it, to humble him all the days of his life. So *Peters* denial of Chriſt, *Luke* chap. 23. though it were for fear, yet being againſt knowledge and conſcience; Oh, it cauſeth him to weep bitterly. And indeed, ſins of knowledge, and againſt conſcience, are done with ſome preſumption againſt God. And therefore, if ever a man be touched for them they will wound him deep, and cauſe fears to follow. *Luk.* 23. 1

Uſe 1. Seeing it is ſo fearful and dangerous to ſin againſt knowledge and conſcience, becauſe thereby we do what lyeth in us to quench the Spirit, to wound our conſciences, and it is a great ſtep unto the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt. Oh then, let us in the fear of God take heed we never give that liberty to our own luſts and liking, as to ſin againſt knowledge and conſcience. If the Devil tempts thee to any ſin, which thou knoweſt is condemned in the word of God, as ſwearing, lying, ſtealing, murther, adultery, *&c.* and thy conſcience telleth thee of it, and checks thee for it, do not commit it, though thou mighteſt gain a Kingdom by it. For that which followeth will be a far greater loſs; for thou ſhalt loſe peace of conſcience, and joy in the Spirit, feeling of Gods love, and comfort in affliction; and

if God be not merciful unto thee, thou ſhalt go on from ſin to ſin, to a rebrobate ſenſe. It is true, Ignorance ſhall excuſe no man; yet ſins of ignorance are far leſs than ſins of knowledg, and againſt conſcience. *Paul* perſecuted the Church of God, but it was by ignorance, and therefore God ſhewed him mercy; but if thou of ſpite and malice ſhalt perſecute, and againſt knowledg and the checks of thy conſcience, hurt and injure the ſervants of God, and members of Chriſt, how canſt thou ever look to find mercy? Thou knoweſt that God forbiddeth, and condemneth lying, ſwearing, ſtealing, murther, adultery, drunkenneſs, *&c.* And if thou ſhalt wittingly and willingly ruſh into them, tho' thou know they be forbidden, thou mayſt look for ſome fearful judgments of God upon thee: And therefore, if thou be tempted, anſwer, I will not yeild; It is written, I may not ſteal, lye, commit adultery, *&c.* as Chriſt anſwered the Devil.

Matt. 4.

Uſe 2. We ſee, that if God leave his children, they may fall dangerouſly into great errors, yea, againſt knowledge and conſcience, as *Abraham*, *Paul*, *Peter*, *&c.* For of our ſelves we have no power to reſiſt the ſubtil temptations and aſſaults of the Devil; but even as a ſtaff ſtands ſo long as it is ſtaid, but when it is left alone, preſently it falls with the leaſt puff of wind; ſo do we; and therefore let us not rely too much upon our own power, as *Peter* did, and fell; but fear our weakneſs, and ſuſpect our ſelves, and pray the Lord to hold us to our ſelves, for elſe there is no ſin ſo foul into which we will not eaſily plunge our ſelves.

And

And yet, if the Lord leave us to fall into some great sin against Knowledge and Conscience, let us not despair, or think we have sinned against the Holy Ghost, as it is the Devils usual temptation, to perswade a Christian, that he hath sinned against knowledge and Conscience, and therefore against the Holy Ghost, and that God hath no mercy for him; and to that purpose he abuseth one special place. *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *For it is impossible, that they which were once enlightned, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good Word of God, and of the power of the world to come, if they fall away, should be renewed again by repentance.* By this place, and such like, the subtil Devil labours to bring the Children of God to despair if they commit sin after they be called and enlightned, because they sin against knowledge and conscience.

But that the Children of God may offend and commit some great crime and evil against knowledge, and Conscience, after they be enlightned, and effectually called and sanctified, it appeareth in *Abraham*, *Sarah*, *Paul*, *Peter*, *&c.* and daily experience, proveth it, and therefore all sins of knowledge and against conscience, are not sins against the Holy Ghost; but in that place he speaketh of such, as of desperate malice, and set purpose, offend against the Holy Ghost, and wholly fall away, and abandon all Religion, and renounce Christ, and his Gospel: And therefore the Holy Ghost saith not only, if they fall, but if they fall away, that is, e-

ven cut themſelves clean off from Chriſt. Again, that they ſin wilfully, even deſperately pereſcuting Chriſt in his members and crucifie the Lord of glory, and make a mock of him, trample under foot the Son of God, and account the blood of the New Teſtament as an unholy thing, and deſpiſe the Spirit of God: Now none of all theſe did befal *David*, *Piter*, or any elect child of God; who though they ſin of knowledg againſt conſcience, yet do they mourn and are grieved for it; and it is for fear, or by the continual inſtigation of the Devil, and ſtrength of his temptation, or in haſte, or of weakneſs: But afterwards they do grieve for it, and do deſire nothing more than to repent, and to be reconciled to God, which they cannot do that commit the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Doct. 5. *Heavenly wiſdom is the proper gift of Gods Spirit.* *Job* 6.45. *Iſa.* 45.13.

We learn, that heavenly wiſdom, and ſaving knowledge, which worketh in the heart, and converteth the ſoul, is the proper work and gift of God alone by his Spirit: Thou (O Lord) haſt by thy Spirit taught me wiſdom in the ſecret of my heart, enlightning and given me a heart to know thee; *All the elect ſhall be taught of God.* Again the Lord promiſeth, *To make all her children Scholars of God*; and he will be their Maſter and Teacher: So that it is manifeſt, that God alone is the School maſter, who doth teach by his Spirit true and heavenly wiſdom, ſaving and ſound knowledg in the heart.

God teacheth his wiſdom two ways *Rev.* 3. 9.

And this teaching of God contains two parts; Firſt, the enlightning of the mind; Secondly,

Secondly, the bowing of the heart.

First, the Lord doth by his Spirit, which is the Eye-salve, anoint our eyes, and clear our minds, and maketh us able to understand his Will in his Word: By nature (alas) we cannot know his will; *For the natural man perceives not the things that be of God*; for they be foolishness unto him; and even as the clear Sun is unto a blind man, so is the Word to us; by nature we understand nothing to our good. 1 *Cor.* 3. 10.

Secondly, the Lord teacheth wisdom, in the secret of the heart, when he bows the heart to the obedience of his will, so the Lord opened the heart of *Lydia*, to attend unto the Preaching of *Paul*. *Acts* 16. 14.

Seeing it is God who teacheth wisdom, and saving knowledg, we must labour to become his Scholars and Disciples: We must be willing to learn of his master, to come to his School where his word is taught, and intreat him that he will teach us his will, and teach us wisdom in our hearts; *David*, *Psa.* 119. in many verses hath it, *Teach me thy word, O Lord, and I will keep it even to the end.* And as for such as scorn to have God for their School-master, to come to his School to be taught of God, all their wisdom, if it were as great as the wisdom of *Solomon* and *Achitophel*, it is but folly with God. *Use* 1.

Seeing God, that is our spiritual School-master, teacheth not only the Ear or Tongue but he teacheth the heart, in the secret of the heart and affection, by moving and bowing them to obedience: This sheweth, that most men are not taught of God; for all the know-

ledg that they have of God, and his Word, it is only in Words, lip-knowledge, and the knowledge in the tongue; to talk of God, to discourse and commend Religion, but it never cometh to the heart and conscience, to humble them, or to enlighten the mind, truly to convert the soul, or to bow the will and affection to obedience. Well, know this, that all thy knowledge and wisdom cannot do thee any good, unless it bring forth obedience to the will of God; and therefore try and prove thy knowledge; whether it hath humbled thy heart, moved thy affection to obey the will of God, to keep his Commandements: For if thy heart give way to sin, and thou art not purged, nor bettered, nor reformed in heart and life, (alas) thy knowledge is but carnal, and will never save thy poor soul.

And this serves to stop the mouths of many vain hypocrites and dissemblers, who because they can talk and discourse of matters of Religion, and commend the Preacher, do think themselves jolly fellows, and good Christians. But I say, unless the Spirit of God teach thee wisdom in the secret of thy heart, by bowing it to obedience and Reformation, all thy knowledge is but a carnal and fleshly knowledge which may befal a Reprobate. *Paul* shews us how we may undoubtedly know, whether we be taught of God, or not; *If any many love God, he is taught of God.* So that, by our unfeigned love of God, which will appear in keeping his Commandements, and doing his will, we shall know whether we be truly taught of God:

1 *Cor.* 8.

God: And he that hath not the love of God, nor care to keep his Commandements, that man, let his knowledge be never so great, certainly he was never yet truly taught of God.

VERSE VII.

7. *Purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean: Waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than Snow.*

David having made his requeſt unto God for mercy, for the pardon of his ſins, and uſed a reaſon from the free confeſſion and acknowledgment of them, to move the Lord to pitty him; doth here again renew his ſuit, and humble requeſt unto God; and he prayeth here unto God for two great benefits: Firſt, Juſtification in the free pardon of his ſins, and imputation of Chriſts righteouſneſs, *verſe* 7. And ſecondly, for Sanctification, and Reformation of the whole man, *verſe* 10.

David *renews his former requeſts*: *verſe* 2.

And firſt, *verſe* 7. he intreats the Lord for the free pardon of his ſins, that God would cleanſe and waſh him from them in the blood of Chriſt, the Lamb of God: And ſecondly, he prayeth for the bleſſed fruit of Juſtification; namely, peace of conſcience, and joy in the Spirit, *verſe* 8. For till the conſcience have a certificate from God, and a bleſſed pardon ſealed and applyed by Faith, it cannot be at quiet.

Firſt, ſeeing *David* had prayed before unto God for mercy and pardon of his ſins, and

Doct. 1.

here doth again renew the same Petition, and in other words puts up his request unto God for the same; Hence we learn, that the pardon of our sins is a singular favour and mercy of God bestowed upon us for Jesus Christs sake; which appears in that *David* so often in this *Psalm* prays for it; therefore it is so great and inestimable mercy and hardly come by: Not so easily as most men think. *David* shewed how great a blessing it is, in that he preferred it before a Kingdom; and though he was a King, yet he pronounceth him blessed, not he that was a King in the 32 *Psalm*, v. 1, 2. *But whose sin is pardoned, God hath sent his Son Jesus Christ, to bless you, in turning every one of you from your evil ways*; a blessing of all blessings.

Pardon of sin the greatest mercy.

Use 1. Seeing remission of sins is so great a blessing, and hardly come by: First, we learn, that we esteem of this above all other things in the World. If the question were asked, what we desire in the whole world? We should answer with feeling the pardon of our sins; and therefore we should desire and seek this blessing above all other. If thou be as poor as *Job*, and hast this, thou art rich, and a happy man.

Seeing *David* used so many prayers unto God, and useth such reasons to move the Lord to pity him, and to pardon his offences; Hence we see, that those are much deceived, who think it the easiest matter in the world, to get the pardon of their sins; and if they can but say, *Lord have mercy on me*, all is well: No, no, Lord have mercy on me will not serve the turn; good things are hardly come

come by, without great travel, labour and ſtudy: How much more is it hard to get the pardon of our ſins, the ſalvation of our ſouls, and life eternal? And therefore let us obſerve, that to get the pardon of our ſins we muſt take great pains, labour and diligence; we muſt ſhed many a tear in bewailing them: They will coſt many a ſob, and many a ſigh, many a prayer and requeſt unto God upon our knees; and then if we obtain it, Oh it is a wonderful favour and mercy of God, it will make us truly happy, and bleſſed for evermore.

Parts of the verſe.

In this Verſe here are two perſons meant, The firſt is the Phyſitian, which is God, being intreated by the Patient, *David*, *to purge him with Hyſop*; then the confeſſion of the Patient, *I ſhall be whiter than Snow*; which ſhews a two-fold fruit and effect of his Requeſts. *David* here puts all the work into Gods hands: He doth not ſay, he will help to make the medicine, but leaves it only to God; nor doth *David* ſay to God, make thou the Salve, and I will bring *Hyſop*; but his requeſt and Petition was, *Do thou purge me, do thou waſh me, then ſhall I be clean, and whiter than Snow*; which is the confeſſion of the party.

For the firſt Petition, *Purge me with Hyſop*, In theſe words he alludeth to the legal ceremonies, and manner of purging uſed in the time of the old Law: In the purifying of the Leper, and of any perſon polluted, they were to dip the bunch of *Hyſop* in blood, or in water, and to ſprinkle it on the perſon to be purified: which ceremony was a Type and fi-

Deut. 14. 5, 7. *Num.* 10.

gure of the blood of Jesus Christ, who is that alone sacrifice and lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

Now then, seeing that by this sprinkling with *Hyssop* in the blood of beasts, is meant the sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ, when he saith, *O Lord purge me with Hyssop*, &c. It is all one as if he should have said, O Lord, I am exceedingly polluted and stained with sin and uncleanness, and no Leper was ever more vile and loathsome than I am now in thy sight, neither is there any water to wash and purge me; but I beseech thee, of thy mercy to wash me, and to sprinkle my soul with the blood of that immaculate Lamb *Christ Jesus*, that can alone take away my sins and so I shall be made clean and pure again.

Doct. 2. *Sin is a Leprosie.*

Hence mark, a miserable and cursed fruit of sin: No leprosie did ever so defile the body of man in the time of the Jews, as sin doth stain and defile both body and soul, no Dunghil, nor stinking Carrion is so loathsome in the eyes of man, as an unclean sinner in the sight of God, till he be washed and purged in the blood of Christ.

This is the reason which the Lord giveth *Joshua* 7. 12. Why *Israel* fell before their enemies, and he went not forth with their Armies, when they fell before the men of *Ai*. *Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies, but have turned their backs upon their enemies, because they are execrable*: We see then the nature of sin, how it maketh a man abominable and detestable in the sight of God.

Seeing

Seeing this is the nature and fruit of ſin, that it defileth and ſtaineth both body and ſoul, and maketh them far more loathſome and vile than any Toad or Serpent; how ſhould we abhor ſin, and every wicked way? We will be very loath to eat Poyſon, or Rats-bane, or any thing elſe wherein is danger: Oh, ſin is a kind of Rats-bane, which infects and poyſons both body and ſoul, and therefore let us ſhun ſin and touch it not. *Uſe* 1.

When as we be defiled with ſin, and ſo made filthy and unclean in the ſight of God, and more vile than a Leper, or Dunghil, or Carrion, Toad or Serpent; Oh, let us pray, with *David*, to be waſhed and purged from our filthineſs; let us repent of all our ſins, bewail our uncleanneſs: let us by faith, as with a bunch of *Hyſop*, beſprinkle our ſouls with the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. *Uſe* 2.

Seeing *David* deſired to be *purged with Hyſop*: We learn hence that the Lord would not that man ſhould deſpiſe ſuch Ceremonies and Types of Chriſt as he himſelf commanded in the time of the Law; and though it may ſeem a vain and needleſs thing to beſprinkle them with a bunch of *Hyſop*, dipped in the blood of a beaſt; yet ſeeing it was the Commandment of God, they did not deſpiſe the Ceremony, being a Type of the blood of Chriſt: When they could not behold with bodily eyes the blood of Chriſt, it pleaſed God by ſuch Ceremonies and Types, to help their faith, by ſprinkling the blood of a beaſt, to ſhew unto them, that they muſt be ſprinkled in their ſouls with the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. Doct. 3. *The Ceremonies under the Law were but to lead us unto Jeſus Chriſt.*

Hence

Use. Obedience required to Gods Ordinances.

Hence we learn, by the example of *David*, and all the Holy Fathers and Servants of God, in the time of the Law, to use all such Sacraments and Ceremonies as God commandeth in his word, for the helping of our Faith: We cannot see the blood of Christ, nor touch it with our outward senses; yet the Lord hath appointed the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, that in them we might see, feel, touch and taste, as it were, the body and blood of Jesus Christ: And therefore, all those which despise these Sacraments, making little or no account of them, shew that they despise the Ordinance of God, and so make light of that which is ordained for the good of their souls.

Doct. 4. *Christs blood alone doth purge our sins. Heb. 9. 9. 1 Joh. 1. 7. Rev. 1. 5. Joh. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 2.*

Mark further, when that *David* prayeth the Lord to purge him with *Hyssop*, the word signifies to purge by Sacrifice, even the Sacrifice of the Son of God, and by his Death and Blood-shedding to purge his sins away: So as he confesseth there is nothing in Heaven, or Earth, that is of force to purge him from his offences, and uncleanness, but the blood of Christ alone. It is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs and Goats, that can wash away the least spot of sin, but even the blood of that immaculate Lamb, Christ Jesus; and to him all the Sacrifices had relation, and shadowed our Saviour Jesus Christ the true Paschal Lamb unto us.

The use of the Ceremonies under the Law.

And this was the reason why *David* maketh mention of *Hyssop*, that God would *purge him with Hyssop*, because God, in the time of the Law, ordained this Ceremony for a confirmation of their Faith, and to help the people

ple of the *Jews* to the better ſight and knowledg of the promiſed Meſſiah; for ſeeing our Saviour was not yet come into the world, and they could not ſee the work of redemption as yet performed, the Lord would lead them by theſe ceremonies unto Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, that they might ſee him, as it were before their eyes: For when they ſaw a Beaſt ſlain, and the blood ſpilt, they then took a bunch of *Hyſop* dipt in the blood of the Beaſt, and beſprinkled them that offered the ſame with the blood. They were thereby taught even ſo much, that Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and promiſed Meſſiah, ſhould be ſlain, and put to death, his blood ſhed for their ſins, and they muſt by Faith, as a bunch of *Hyſop*, beſprinkle their ſouls with the blood of our Saviour for the pardon of their ſins. *Note.*

It is true indeed, that the Lord hath eaſed us, in the time of the Goſpel, of all thoſe old and antient Ceremonies; neither is it the will of God, that we ſhould be clogged with the ſenſeleſs, needleſs and beggarly rudiments being the Ceremonies and Traditions of men, which become not the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. But yet hath in mercy appointed certain helps and means to lead us unto Chriſt Jeſus; as the two Sacraments to help our Faith: For we being as yet carnal, (alas) we cannot behold any more than we ſee. And therefore the Lord hath appointed them as helps to lead us to this Saviour, to ſet him before our eyes in the water in Baptiſm, and bread and wine in the Lords Supper; that ſo our Faith ſhould be confirmed thereby, *Gal.* 4. 9.

thereby, and we might even see Christ Jesus before our eyes. And therefore, as *David* did carefully use such helps and ceremonies as God commanded, for the strengthning of their Faith; so let us be careful to use the helps that God hath left under the Gospel, for the strengthning of our weak faith.

Purge me with Hyssop.

The meaning of the words.

THe meaning is this, accept of that most perfect and everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to my sin: As if he should have said; O Lord, I confess I have sinned exceedingly, I have been born in sin, and have by Murder and Adultery deserved to be condemned eternally, and to have the curse and punishment due to my sin to be cast upon me; but I beseech thee in mercy, to accept of the blood shedding of thy Son and my Saviour Jesus Christ, for the satisfaction due for my sin. *David*, he watered his cheeks by day, and his couch by night. And indeed, tears of true penitents are the wine of the Angels; and those that have a sorrowful heart, have the Sword of *David*, and the Bow of *Jonathan*, for there is no Rhetorick in Gods sight, to that of tears and sighs; for tears have a voice, as it may appear by *Davids* words, *Thou hast heard the voice of my weeping:* And by our unfeigned tears we offer violence to Heaven and tye the ears of God to the tongues of men.

And whereas the justification of a sinner in the sight of God stands on two parts: First, remission and pardon of sin; Secondly,

ly, the imputation of Christs righteousnes; Methinks the Prophet requires and begs both these at the hands of God: First, to be purged, or, as the word signifies to purge, (not by washing,) but by sacrificing, to appease the wrath and anger of God, by the blood of Christ. Secondly, when he prayeth to be washed, he desireth to be made pure, and righteous, not in his own righteousnes, but only in the righteousnes of Jesus Christ, imputed to him, and laid hold upon by Faith.

Doct. 5. *Salvation is to be sought for only in Christ.* 1 *John* 1. 7. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. *Rev.* 1. 5.

Seeing *David* entreats the Lord that he would *Purge him*; that is, accept of the most perfect Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to his sins: We learn, that there is no name given under Heaven, whereby a man shall be saved, but only in the name of Jesus Christ; it is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs and Goats, that can wash away the least spot of sin, but only the blood of that immaculate Lamb Christ Jesus. It is Christ himself that must purge us, who is our High-Priest: for we cannot pacifie and purifie our sins by *Hyssop*, or by the blood of a young Heifer, or by oblations and offerings, nothing but Christ and his merits, can wash and purifie us from our sins: It is only he that hath purged our sins by shedding his own blood, and hath procured us the pardon of our sins; and now sitteth at the right hand of God, making still intercession for all true penitent sinners.

Use 1.

Hence we see the endless and unspeakable mercy of God to miserable men; who, when no other means could be found, no Water or Herb could heal the foul of a sinner, and wash

wash him from sin, and the punishment of it, but only the precious blood of the Son of God, was content to give his own Son to death for us; which made St. *John* to admire it: And if God hath not failed us in this, but could rather be content to have his only Son put to death, and hang on the Cross, than we should perish, how should he deny any smaller and lighter matter to us?

Joh. 3. 16. *Rom.* 8. 32

Use 2. Behold here the greatness and hainousness of mans sins, which could be purged by no Angels in Heaven or Earth, but only by the blood of Jesus Christ alone: If all men and Angels should have died, and been cast for ever into Hell-fire, they could not satisfie the infinite wrath of God for one sin; but the blood of Jesus Christ must be shed, else we can have no pardon.

Use 3. This condemns that wicked and erroneous Doctrine of the Papists, who teach indeed, that *Christ* by his Death hath satisfied Gods justice for the fault and eternal punishment due to their sins; but men must either in this Life, by Works, or buy it of the Pope, or else in Purgatory satisfie Gods justice for temporal punishments: Now then, what is this, but to make the Sacrifice and Death of Christ imperfect, when as it must be patched and pieced with mens merits? but we believe, and hold Christs death is a sufficient Sacrifice for all our sins.

Use 4. *Rom.* 6. *Gal.* 3. Would you then have the pardon of your sins? Every sin deserves death, and the curse of God: Now there is no way but this, to believe in Jesus Christ, to embrace him by Faith,

Faith, that ſo God the Father may for his ſake pardon our ſins, accept of his Death and Paſſion for the puniſhment of them all.

And that we may be purged from our ſins both the fault and the puniſhment, by the Blood and Sacrifice of Chriſt, we muſt firſt repent of them, with *David*, be grieved for them, bewail them, amend our lives, and become new creatures in Chriſt Jeſus; we muſt beg for pardon of them at the hands of God: We muſt do with our ſins, as *Phinehas* did with *Zimri* and *Cozby*, pierce them even through and through.

Secondly, beſides, we muſt be ſprinkled with *Hyſop*, that is, as in the time of the Law, they dipped the *Hyſop* in the blood of the Beaſt, and ſo beſprinkled the perſon to be cleanſed; even ſo muſt we by Faith, as it were with a bunch of *Hyſop*, apply the blood of Chriſt, and by Faith beſprinkle our defiled Conſciences, it will cleanſe us from all our ſins, and ſatisfie the wrath of God for the puniſhment.

But if men either do not repent of them, and leave their ſins, or do not come with Faith to apply the blood of Chriſt, they cannot have pardon: As if there were a ſovereign Plaiſter to cure any ſore, if a man do not apply it to the wound, but let it lie in a box, it will do him no good; ſo unleſs we apply the blood of Chriſt to our wounds and ſores by Faith, alas it cannot help us: And as the woman with the bloody iſſue touched Chriſts garment, and was healed; ſo if we can by Faith touch the blood of our Saviour, and apply it to our ſelves, it will heal

heal all the bleeding wounds of sin.

The second request is, that God would wash him, and make him pure, not imputing his offences unto him, but covering them in the Death and Obedience of his Son Jesus Christ: And therefore, in the second part of this verse, he prayeth for the imputation to Christs righteousness; namely, that God would not only remit the punishment due to his sins, but look upon him as he is in Christ, covered with his righteousness, and that God would account him just for our Saviours obedience, holiness, satisfaction and righteousness. For when God beholds a poor sinner covered with righteousness, holiness, and obedience of his Son our Saviour, then he accounts him as no sinner, but just and righteous: Even as a man beholding any red thing through a red glass, it appeareth red, or of the same colour; so if the Lord look on us in our Saviour, we seem righteous and holy before him.

Psal. 32. 1, 2.

Doct. 6. *Sin defiles a man.*

Whereas the Prophet *David* intreats the Lord to wash him, he shews that he was defiled with sin, and stained with uncleanness, and so stood in great need of Gods mercy, to cleanse his filthy soul, and defiled conscience, now polluted with most vile adultery, and filthy uncleanness: That his soul was now besprinkled with the innocent blood of that faithful Servant, and loyal Subject, *Uriah* the Hittite. And as it was with *David*, sin infected him, made him vile and loathsome, filthy and abominable in the sight of God: Even so it doth begrime the face of the best of Gods Children, it stains and

and pollutes them both in ſoul and body; yea, no carrion is more loathſome and odious than a ſinner defiled and polluted with ſin is in the ſight of God.

The Leproſie was a loathſome diſeaſe, it infected the body, and the very garments, yea, the ſtones and Timber. But this ſpiritual Leproſie, ſin, infects the whole man, body and ſoul; yea, it infecteth heaven and earth, and all other creatures in the world; and there is nothing that can take away the ſpots and blemiſhes of ſin, but only the precious blood of Jeſus Chriſt, laid hold on by truth faith.

Well ſeeing all of us are thus defiled with ſin, as *David* was, in ſoul and body, let us deſire to be waſhed, let us bewail them, loath and hate them, entreat the Lord that he would not impute our ſins unto us, but cover them under the Robe of Chriſts righteouſneſs; and that we ſhould abhor every ſin for this cauſe; becauſe it defiles us, it pollutes us, and makes us unworthy to appear in Gods preſence. *Uſe* 1.

Seeing *David*, though an holy Prophet of God, a man after Gods own heart, yet deſires the Lord to waſh him from his ſins and to cover them in the obedience of Chriſt Jeſus, applyed by faith: We ſee, that no man is able to ſtand before the face of God in his own righteouſneſs, in his own works, or worthineſs, for if any might, who might better have done it than *David*; a man truly ſanctified, a holy Prophet, a man after Gods own heart? Yea, the Prophet *Eſay* ſaith, that all our righteouſneſs is no better than a *Iſa.* 64.6

ſtained

Phil. 3. 9. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30.

ſtained clout, full of blood, and all pollution: And ſo St. *Paul* deſires that he may not be found in his own righteouſneſs, and worthineſs, at the day of Judgment, but in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, laid hold on by Faith. And therefore let us renounce all our own goodneſs and worthineſs, and account all but as dung in reſpect of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. And as for the Church of *Rome*, we may ſee their intollerable pride, that they do ſo much reſt and rely upon their own goodneſs and worthineſs, merits and righteouſneſs, to ſtand upon it, and appear in it for remiſſion of ſins, and life eternal. But (alas) if *Paul*, *David*, and all the Saints of God abhor themſelves in duſt and aſhes, deſire to be purged, and waſhed, and covered in the Obedience and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt; yea, count all their own Righteouſneſs but as dung, and dare not appear in it before the ſeat of Gods Judgments, but in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: Shall any Papiſts of them dare to ſtand before God in Judgment, in his own Righteouſneſs and Worthineſs? No, no, he ſhall tremble and quail, and not abide ſo great and glorious a preſence.

I ſhall be clean, I ſhall be whiter than Snow.

IN theſe words the Prophet ſhews the event and iſſue of this, when a man doth truly repent, is reconciled to God in Jeſus Chriſt, and is waſhed and purged from his ſins by Faith in Chriſts blood; then he is made of a moſt vile and loathſome ſinner, a moſt bleſſed and moſt holy child of God; of a filthy unclean Limb of the Devil, a bleſſed

ſed member of Jeſus Chriſt, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God, being covered in Chriſts Righteouſneſs.

Doct. 7. *The woful eſtate of all natural men.*

Seeing *David* ſaith, when God ſhall pardon him his ſins, on his true Repentance, and be reconciled unto him, covering his ſin in the merits and obedience of Chriſt, *Then he ſhall be clean*: Then, before a man repent, be reconciled to God by Jeſus Chriſt, and be purged from his ſins, he is moſt unclean, and filthy, vile, loathſome, and abominable in the ſight of God: and indeed ſo he is; no Carrion worſe, no Toad ſo ugly, nor Serpent ſo full of poyſon, as a filthy ſinner polluted with ſin, till he repent, get the pardon of them, and be reconciled to God by Chriſt; I pray you take knowledge of this Doctrine, whatſoever thou art, high, low, rich, poor, young, old, Prince or Noble, till thou repent, till thou turn to God, till thou get the pardon of thy ſins, and be waſhed by Faith in the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, thou art moſt vile and miſerable, thou art moſt unclean and filthy, thou art more ugly than the venemous Toad, more loathſome than the Serpent, more filthy and ſtinking than the carrion, yea, no creature is ſo loathſome before God as a filthy ſinner, that lives in ſin without Repentance, that is not waſhed and purged from them in the blood of Chriſt. *David*, he thought he could never be clean, and purged of his ſins, till he had confeſſed them, and labours to repair the ruines of ſo great offences: which made him ſo courageouſly accuſe himſelf, defying the Devil and his flattering pleaſures. *David* did not leave one ſin, but thruſt

thruſt it headlong out of his heart by Repentance and contrition.

Uſe 1. Well ſeeing this is the woful and miſerable eſtate of all impenitent ſinners, how ſhould this move every one with ſpeed to repent, to turn to God, to ſeek to be reconciled to God by his Son, and our only Saviour, to deſire pardon and forgiveneſs of all his ſins, to be waſhed and cleanſed from them all in and by the blood and merits of Chriſt? For this know, I ſay, till thou art reconciled to God, doſt repent, art waſhed and cleanſed, thy caſe is fearful, thou wert better be a Toad than a man without this: Thou maiſt go in ſilk and velvet, in gay and golden apparel; thou maiſt have a fair body, perfume thee with ſweet odours, *&c.* but till thou Repent, thou art filthy and loathſome in Gods ſight.

Oh how ſhould this ſerve to pluck down the pride of many impenitent tranſgreſſors? Men and women think highly of themſelves, ruffle it out in Silk and Velvet of the neweſt faſhion; but all this while they know not that their poor ſouls are loathſome in Gods ſight, that God hates them, and cannot abide them: Oh then, be waſhed, be cleanſed in the blood of Chriſt, which alone can waſh away our ſins.

Oh that men would remember that ſaying of Chriſt, *Thou art poor, blind, miſerable and naked*; then they would ſay with *Job*, *I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes*: Then They would never give any reſt unto their Souls until they have repented, and got pardon, be reconciled, and waſhed, from their filthy ſins. Seeing

Iſa. 1. 16.
Rev. 2. 14
Job 42. 6.

Seeing *David* acknowledgeth, that when he ſhall repent, get pardon of his ſins, be reconciled to God, be waſhed from the filthineſs of his ſins, then *he ſhall be clean*, and white, yea, moſt white, even as Snow. Hence we learn, that as a filthy tranſgreſſor that lives and goes on ſtill in ſin without repentance, there is no creature more ugly, hateful and unclean: So the child of God, that doth repent, that is waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, reconciled to God, he is a bleſſed and glorious creature, moſt beautiful and fair in the ſight of *God*; not by any goodneſs or worthineſs of his own, but by the mercy of *God* ſo accounting us, and the merits and worthineſs of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe Righteouſneſs we ſhall be found righteous, and by whoſe merits and worthineſs we are covered. The Saints of *God* go in long white Robes, which are made white in the blood of the Lamb. *Can.* 1. 7. *Ez.* 16. 5. 10, 11, 12 *Rev.* 1. 38

Seeing this is the bleſſed and happy eſtate of all thoſe that do truly repent, be reconciled to *God*, embrace and believe in Jeſus Chriſt, are waſhed and cleanſed from their ſins in his blood, and covered in his Righteouſneſs: O, how ſhould it move every man and woman to run to *God*, to forſake their evil ways, and their filthy ſins, to put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to believe, to become the Sons and Daughters of *God*! It is an honourable thing to be a Son to an earthly King, to be cloathed in cloth of *God*. *&c.* But if we compare this with the bleſſed and glorious eſtate of *Gods* children, it is but dung and beggery; it is but like rotten rags, and *1 Cor.* 9. 10.

beggars

beggars clouts, taken off the Dunghil: *He that is wise, shall shine as the Firmament; and he that converts many to righteousness, shall shine as the Sun in the Firmament*; O then, again and again, let us repent, let us be reconciled to God, let this be the wedding garment, which will make us beautified before God.

Dan. 12.

Another use is this, seeing that the state of Gods children, even in this World, is so blessed and so glorious, so beautiful and excellent, being reconciled unto God, washed in the blood of Christ, and cloathed with the most pure Robe of Christs righteousness: Here is matter of comfort to all the poor children of God, whom the World is not worthy of. Alas, they are esteemed as beggars, they are esteemed as vile and base, miserable, and cast-aways, by ungodly men; they are made as the dung in the streets and as the off-scouring of the World, and men even tread and trample them under their feet: Now, what is that which may comfort the hearts of Gods children? Surely this that though they seem vile, base and miserable, in the blind eyes of all sinful men, yet they be most white, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God, our Heavenly Father: Though the World hate us, contemn us, be weary of us, loath and abhor us; let us remember the Lord loves us, takes delight in us, we are fair and most beautiful in his sight. They do not see what we be, they cannot know that we are little Princes, Sons, and great Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Sons and Daughters of the great God; and therefore this may teach us patience, seeing we

Use 2.

1 *Joh.* 3. 2.

we know that God loves us, and that we are dear unto him, though the World hate us So it is with many Prophets of God, and true believers, whom the World was not worthy of. *Heb.* 11.

Lastly, Here is matter of great comfort and consolation for all grievous sinners, that have committed many and grievous sins, that if they will unfeignedly repent, and turn to *God*, embrace and lay hold on Christ, God will make them, of the cursed firebrands of Hell, Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, of the limbs of the Devil, the members of Jesus Christ, of adulterers, and filthy sinners, such as *Joseph* was, chast and pure, and the Holy servants of God. This the Lord promiseth men, that if they will repent, turn to God, and forsake their sinful ways, Then, *Though their sins were as red as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow, though they were as crimson, yet will I make them seven as wool:* That is to say, though men be guilty of bloody sins, notorious crimes, as *David* of murder, uncleanness, whoredom, adultery, covetousness, swearing, contempt of the Word of God, *&c.* Yet, if thou hast the grace to repent, certainly the Lord will most thorowly purge and wash away all thy sins; he will seal thee a general pardon of them all, if thou wilt only repent, and lay hold upon Christ. *Isa.* 1. 18, 19.

O then, let me speak unto you in the name of God: Hast thou been a vile blasphemer? Hast thou been a contemner of the Word? A persecutor of Gods children? Hast thou

been a murtherer, a cruel oppreſſor, uſurer? haſt thou been an adulterer, a filthy liver? Well, if thou wilt now repent, turn to God, bewail thy ſins, beg pardon for them; if thou wilt renounce, leave and forſake them, become a new creature in Chriſt Jeſus, and amend thy ſinful life, and as *David* did dethrone Satan, and caſt out of thy mind and heart thoſe Legions of ſins which by Nature we have, and by our over-ſight committed: Lo then, God doth this day offer mercy unto thee; he will embrace thee, as he did the Prodigal child; he will waſh thee in the blood of his own Son; he will cover thee in his Righteouſneſs? he will pardon all thy ſins, and never lay them to thy charge; he will make of thee that art a vile and miſerable ſinner, a very fire-brand of Hell, a bleſſed member of Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore let not the number or greatneſs of thy ſins hinder thee; for if thou canſt repent, God will pardon them all, and receive thee to mercy: O then, If thou wilt not for all this repent and turn to God, leave and forſake thy ſins and impieties, become a new creature in Chriſt Jeſus, but lie in thy ſins, and wallow in the filth of them ſtill, and harden thy heart againſt all the ſweet and gracious offers of mercy, how art thou worthy to periſh, if thou ſhalt deſpiſe ſo great Salvation?

Luk. 15.

2 *Cor.* 5. 19.

VERSE

VERSE VIII.

Make me to hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.

David here intreats for peace of conſcience.

David having in the former Verſe, craved mercy at the hands of God, for the pardon of his ſins, which were both many and great; he doth in this Verſe, beg at Gods hands the bleſſed fruit of the ſame: Namely, the bleſſed and comfortable perſwaſions of Gods mercy, and aſſurance of his love, for the pardon of his ſins, that God would even teſtifie unto his poor ſoul, and wounded conſcience, by his Spirit inwardly, that he was appeaſed and pacified with him, and in Jeſus Chriſt reconciled unto him; that ſo being thus ſatisfied of Gods love, of reconciliation with God, and the remiſſion of his ſins, his wounded conſcience might be comforted, his dying ſoul, and heavy heart might be reſtored, and his exceeding ſorrow might be mitigated and aſſwaged. *David* now at length knew, that Nature was an ill guide to Heaven, therefore he deſires the Lord to direct him in his ways, that he might hear of joy and gladneſs, *That the bones which thou haſt broken, may rejoyce.*

Sin hath taken away his inward joy.

Parts of the verſe.

In the ſame Verſe note two ſpecial points, Firſt, what is the thing *David* ſo earneſtly craved of God: Namely, that he would cauſe him to have comfortable and happy news of Gods mercy, and aſſurance of the remiſſion of his ſins, *Make me to hear, &c.*

Secondly, the end whereof he ſo begs

and requests for this, Namely, that his broken heart, and bleeding conscience might be comforted, and his unspeakable grief by the feeling of Gods love might be finished; *That the bones which thou hast broken, may rejoice.*

Make me to hear.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I beseech thee to witness thy love and favour unto me; yea, I beseech thee send thy blessing and holy Spirit, to certifie my conscience of the blessed pardon of all my sins, that thou wilt not enter into judgment with me for them.

And that which *David* doth here confess of himself, all the children of God shall one day be sure to find by experience, that sin doth spoil them of their inward peace and joy. O then, if we could remember how sweet the joy and peace is, which by sin we lose, for the vain and transitory pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, we would never make so bad exchange.

The main point is, what is it that *David* so earnestly craves of God; namely, that God would assure him of the blessed pardon of his sins.

But some may say, this seems needless: Did not the Lord send *Nathan* to him, who (after *David* had confessed his sin) told him, *The Lord hath pardoned thy sins, thou shalt not die.* How then comes it to pass, that here he prays the Almighty to cause him to hear, and feel this, the remission of his sins? I answer, first,

2 *Sam.* 12. 13.

firſt, it is true that *Nathan*, the Prophet of God, did aſſure him of the remiſſion of his ſins upon his true repentance: But yet *David*'s heart being wounded with ſin, could not ſo fully feel and find the aſſurance of Gods love, and remiſſion of his ſins, and therefore he entreats the Lord to certifie his conſcience inwardly by his Spirit, and to aſſure him of the ſame. Secondly, I anſwer, that though *David* heard *Nathan* tell him, that the Lord would remit his offences, yet he judged the outward teſtimony of all men and Angels as nothing, unleſs the certificate and the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt go with it, inwardly to certifie, aſſure, and perſwade the poor wounded conſcience of Gods love and favour.

Hence we may learn ſundry points of inſtruction: Firſt, that as *David* prays to be aſſured of Gods love, and the remiſſion of his ſins; ſo every true child of God that believes and repents of all his offences, may know, and be reſolved in the confidence of Gods love and favour, and the forgiveneſs of them all. And in the Articles of our Faith, we do profeſs, we believe the remiſſion of our ſins, and Life everlaſting: And ſeeing we pray for this, that God would forgive our ſins and treſpaſſes, therefore we believe it, elſe we ſin in praying for it; ſo that every one that truly repenteth, and embraceth Jeſus Chriſt, is a new creature, hates vile ways, endeavours in heart and life to pleaſe God, that he may know, and be aſſured that he is reconciled to God, and his ſins pardoned.

Doct. 1. *Every child of God may be aſſured of the Pardon of his ſins.*

2 *Pet.* 1.

Vſe. 1. This condemns that helliſh Doctrine of the Papiſts who teach and hold, that no man can be aſſured of the pardon of his ſins, unleſs God ſend a Revelation from Heaven to do it: And that it is a virtue of Faith, to doubt of Gods love: But how did *Paul* doubt, when he ſaid, *I am fully perſwaded, &c.* Alas how dare a vile ſinner, not juſtified, nor aſſured of Gods love, and the pardon of his ſins, how dares he come to call on God, and make his prayer unto him; Dares a Traytor come to his King, or ſpeak unto him not having pardon? Well, this Doctrine of doubting, it is a rack for all wounded conſciences, and afflicted ſouls, when they cannot tell whether God loveth or hateth them, nor know not that their ſins be pardoned.

Rom. 8. 28. *Job* 13. 15. 19, 25. *Pſ.* 125. 1.

Vſe 2. And therefore, that Religion which teacheth Doubtings, and pronounceth them accurſed who hold that a man may be aſſured of Salvation; we accuſe it as a Doctrine, enemy to Faith and Salvation. And indeed, it is ſtrange to ſee that whereas they teach, a man is able to fulfil the whole Law of God, and by his works to merit eternal life, yet they accuſe him, if he ſays he is ſure to be ſaved: So directly doth one point of their falſe Doctrine impugne another. Indeed it is no marvel though their Religion can yeild no comfort for the certainty of Salvation, ſeeing they draw men from off the Foundation, Chriſt Jeſus in whom only it is promiſed, that we ſhall find reſt for our ſouls.

Seeing *David* prays for this aſſurance of Gods love, to be aſſured of the pardon of his

his sins by his Spirits and that upon his true repentance; this shews, that the confidence that most men have, is a fond presumption and security: They would not doubt of Gods love for all the World; they believed ever since they were born, and thus they brag of their strong faith, but they deceive themselves; for till a man do repent, turn to God, believe in Christ, become a new creature, he can have no assurance of Gods love, or pardon for his sins.

Let all true Christians examine themselves, whether they feel and find this blessed assurance and perswasion of Gods love, and the pardon of their sins: If thou hast it, make much of it, lose it not; if thou want it, use all means give all diligence to get it; repent, turn to God, beg mercy and pardon for thy sins, embrace Jesus Christ, believe in him, that thou mayest be assured; and never be at rest till thou canst say, I am perswaded of Gods love in Christ Jesus: *I know my Redeemer liveth*; I am perswaded I am the child of God; else a man can have no joy, peace, nor comfort.

Though *Nathan* had told him his sins were forgiven, yet *David* could not be assured, till he felt the inward assurance and certificate of Gods Spirit, to perswade and witness the love of God unto him for the pardon of his sins.

Doct. 2. *Mans testimony of the remission of sins, is nothing with ut the testimony of Gods Spirit.* Rom. 8. 15.

Hence we learn, that it is not the testimony of all men and Angels that can assure us in our souls of Gods love and pardon of our sins, without the inward special certificate and perswasion of Gods Spirit, who is called

Rom. 8. 15. *the Spirit of Adoption*, becauſe he doth reveal, yea, perſwade, and alſo aſſure our ſouls that we be adopted. If *Peter*, *Paul*, *Nathan*, yea, all the world, nay, if an Angel from Heaven ſhould tell me, I am the child of God, yet unleſs God doth further certifie my conſcience inwardly by his Spirit, I ſhould not be aſſured, but doubt ſtill, even as *David* did in this place. Although *Nathan* had ſaid, *Thy ſins are forgiven*; yet *David* could not be aſſured, until he had the inward and comfortable perſwaſion of Gods Holy Spirit. Men cannot know the ſecret counſel of God, they may deceive, and be deceived; but the Spirit of God knows all things; and the Apoſtle ſaith, *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage to fear again*; *But ye have received the ſpirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The ſame ſpirit beareth witneſs to our ſpirits, that we are the children of God*; *and becauſe ye are ſons therefore God hath ſent forth the ſpirit of his Son in your hearts, whereby we cry Abba Father.* Again, *God the Father hath ſealed us, and put into our hearts the earneſt of his Spirit.* So that you ſee, it is the only work of the Spirit, to aſſure our hearts and conſciences of Gods love, and the pardon of our ſins; and without this inward certificate and aſſurance of the Spirit, all the teſtimonies of men and Angels cannot aſſure our conſcience.

Note.

Rom. 8. 15, 16.

2 *Cor.* 1. 22.

Well then, ſeeing that there can be no aſſurance in a mans conſcience of the remiſſion of our ſins, and life Eternal, but by the inward certificate and teſtimony of Gods Spirit, let us pray for this, labour to find and feel our hearts perſwaded and aſſured inwardly

wardly by the Holy Ghost of the pardon of our sins, and the love of God in Christ. *Prove your selves, whether ye be in the Faith.* And because men are deceived generally with a fond presumption, and foolish Opinion, that they be the children of God, and shall be saved; and this carnal presumption is more common than true saving faith, I will shew how you may know this testimony and certificate of Gods love, when it is in our consciences. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

Marks of Gods Spirit.

First, the Spirit of God assures no such man remission of his sins, but such as be humbled for them, repent of them, leave and forsake them, become new creatures, and walk in newness of life. And therefore, if thou livest in sin, be neither humbled for them, nor bewail them, hast an intention to live still in thy sins, ignorance, lying, swearing, covetousness, uncleanness, *&c.* Thou canst have no assurance of Gods love; and this assurance of thine, if thou hast any, it is meer self-conceit: For where men do not repent, and turn unto God, and amend their lives, there is no faith, neither is the Spirit of God remaining in them; and therefore they cannot be assured of Gods love and mercy. 1. *What man repents of his sin.*

Secondly, The Spirit of Adoption doth not only tell a man that he is the child of God, but doth by sundry arguments and reasons perswade the child of God, that he is elected, that God loves him, and that his sins be forgiven. But wicked men have no such thoughts in their Hearts, only they have a fond opinion and conceit, which is no good ground; neither did the 2. *Is perswaded of the Spirit.*

Spirit of God ever perſwade their hearts thereunto.

2. *The effect will appear.*

We ſhall know the teſtimony of Gods Spirit, that it is ſure and ſound, by the fruits and effects of it: For if the Spirit of God do truly teſtifie the love of God for the remiſſion of our ſins, and life eternal; then it will follow, that we ſhall hate our ſins, loath and abhor them, becauſe they grieve our moſt gracious God and loving Father: Yea, we ſhall deſire in all things to honor the Almighty, to do his Will, to pleaſe and ſerve him: So that if we find and feel theſe things, a true hatred and diſlike of ſin, becauſe it diſhonours the Lord, a deſire to live in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all our days, it is a certain ſign, that the Spirit of the Lord doth aſſure us of our reconciliation with the Lord. But if men find not this, no hatred of ſin, no love to obey his Will, and keep his Commandments, but ignorance, rebellion, and the like. Let them brag what they will of their ſtrong faith, feeling of Gods love, and I know not what, yet it is certain, they have not the Teſtimony of Gods Spirit which *David* prayeth for here, but a fond and fooliſh opinion proceeding of ſelf-love, carnal ſecurity, and deviliſh preſumption, which in the end fail them.

Doct. 3. *Gods meanes comfort unto us by the Miniſtry of his holy Word.*

Make me hear of joy and gladneſs.

IN theſe words note a third point of Doctrine; Namely whence and where *David*

vid looked for comfort; as from the Word of God, hearing the ſame opened, and preached unto him. So that in this examp'e we learn, that all true comfort, and ſpiritual conſolation, is to be learned, and ſearched out of the word of God; that is the Store-houſe of heavenly comfort. And therefore our Saviour Chriſt bids us ſearch there for conſolation; *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have Eternal Life.* Again it is called *Spirit and Life*, becauſe God uſes the Preaching and Miniſtry of the Goſpel to beget ſpiritual Life. It is called, *The Word of Truth, even the Goſpel of our Salvation.* The Lord might have illuminated the mind of the *Eunuch*, *Acts* 8. by the immediate working of his own Spirit, and have made him underſtand the Scripture which he was reading, without any Interpreter; but it pleaſed the Lord to do it by the Miniſtry of *Philip*: He might have likewiſe communicated his Spirit to *Cornelius*. *Acts* 10. But the Lord would not do it, but by the Miniſtry of *Peter*, according to that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *It hath pleaſed the Lord by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave ſo many as believe*; and ſo many ſhall believe as are ordained to eternal Life. If then thou be deſirous, with *David*, *to hear of joy and gladneſs*, and to have aſſurance of the pardon of thy ſins, then reverence the Miniſtry of the Word, by which the Lord communicateth his Spirit to ſuch as he will ſave. And ſurely this muſt needs be an exceeding comfort to all the children of God, that God doth not only freely forgive them their ſins, but alſo telleth them

Joh. 5. 63.

Joh. 1. 13.

Rom. 14.

them of the forgiveneſs of the ſame, ſealing to their hearts by his holy Spirit the teſtimony thereof.

Uſe 1. See, God hath appointed the Miniſtery of the holy Word to be the means to work all true and ſpiritual comfort: Oh, then, in all our needs, wants, and diſtreſſes, let us ſearch the Word of God; there is comfort to be found, many heavenly and ſweet promiſes of the Goſpel, to quicken and renew our poor diſtreſſed ſouls; and this the Prophet *David* knew by good experience, that there is more ſound comfort in the feeling of Gods love, than in all the world beſides. It may well be compared to the Ttee St. *John* ſpeaketh of, which beareth twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the Tree ſerve to cure and heal diſeaſed and wounded ſouls; and the fruit of the Tree of the Word of God is moſt ſweet and pleaſant; and therefore let us, if we would deſire true comfort indeed, ſeek it in the means; namely, in the Word and Miniſtery of the Holy Ghoſt.

Pſal. 119. 55. *Pſa.* 84. 1. *Pſal.* 45. *Pſal.* 4. *Rev.* 22. 2.

Uſe 2. This ſheweth, that all thoſe be enemies unto their own ſouls, that deſpiſe the Miniſtery of the Word, and the Preaching of the Goſpel. If ever thou find one jot of the comfort, thou muſt have it in the means that God hath ordained, namely, in the Miniſtery of the Word: Let men ſeek elſewhere, and they ſhall find none. Men may ſeek delight and joy in their Gold and Silver, in merry Company, in this or that, as men uſe to do; but (alas) they cannot find it there; yea, experience ſheweth, that diſtreſſed ſouls, full of wo and miſery, could never

never find true comfort in any thing, ſave in the Miniſtery of the Word of God, and there they have found endleſs comfort, by hearing of the bleſſed and ſaving promiſes of the Goſpel: And therefore, if a man ſhall neglect, or deſpiſe the Word preached, how can they ever find joy or gladneſs, or any dram of ſaving comfort?

Whereas *David* craves of God, that he would cauſe him to hear of joy and gladneſs, that is, that his ſins were all pardoned, and he reconciled to God in Chriſt, that ſo he might have ſome good matter of joy and gladneſs; [For the eye of *David*'s Reaſon made him ſee more than the eye of Nature could let him ſee; for till *Nathan* did open the cauſe by a ſimilitude, he thought all was well on his part, which took *David*'s ears and attention the better.]

Uſe 3. Doct. 3. *Where ſin is not pardoned, there can be no true joy.* *Jer.* 8. 23.

We learn hence, that there is no ſound joy nor comfort in any man or woman, but only in the free pardon of his ſin, and feeling of Gods love in Chriſt: And all other love which men do frame and deviſe unto themſelves, alas, it is but from the teeth outward, it is not ſound, not durable, it is but carnal and earthly, and will eaſily be loſt: *Thus ſaith the* Lord, *let not the wiſe man rejoice in his wiſdom, nor the ſtrong man in his ſtrength; nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me to be the* Lord, and without this, there can be no perfect joy, as we ſee in *David*, and ſo in all diſtreſſed offenders, till they feel the aſſurance of Gods love for the pardon of their ſins.

This

Use 1. This shews, that the common joy of most men and women, is but a carnal joy, earthly, and vain; it is not spiritual, it is not true joy. For all the while they eat, drink, make themselves merry, laugh, and be jovial, they live in sin, in danger of Gods anger, and condemnation: no feeling of Gods love, no assurance of Salvation; and then how can they have any true joy? for this proceeds in the assurance of Gods love, and the remission of sin: *The kingdom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousnes, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; but unto the wicked there is no peace.*

Rom. 14. 7.

Isa. 57. 21.

Object. *Object.* But do we not see, that wicked men that live in sin, that be notorious sinners, swearers, blasphemers, drunkards, &c. that these live in mirth and jollity, in eating, drinking, in ease and idleness; and the children of heaven have much sorrow and heavines, grief, trouble and wrong?

Answ. *Answ.* Yea, it is true, that wicked men, that live in sin, pass their days in eating, drinking, sport and pastime, no sorrow, nor heavines, but spend their days in pleasure: *but suddenly, they go down to Hell.*

Job 21. 13. Now, who will call this true a joy? Nay, it is a swinish and brutish joy, carnal and fleshly; for if they knew all, and saw their misery, that they be in danger of Gods eternal vengeance, of Hell and damnation, Oh then they would mourn, and turn all their mirth into tears. If a Traitor be apprehended, arraigned, convicted and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and look for nothing but present death, and

Psal. 32.

execu-

execution, and yet for all the ſentence pronounced unto him, that he ſhould dye, would fall to eating and drinking (as the world goes now) rather than to pray, and repent him of his wickedneſs; thinking only to riot and revel, to chear his heart before he depart this world, would not all men ſay he was a mad-man. and out of his wits? This is the caſe of all lewd men, they already are condemned, they want nothing but execution, and lye in danger of Hell-fire: Alas, what cauſe have they to be merry, but rather mourn and grief? therefore their mirth is but madneſs. *Jam.* 4.9.

Seeing then we can have no peace of conſcience, or any ſound comfort, until we have the feeling of Gods love, and full aſſurance of the remiſſion of our ſins, let us never give any reſt to our ſouls, until we have repented, and got ſome bleſſed perſwaſion of the Almighties love in Chriſt; and ſome warrant from the Spirit that our ſins are done away; for the Kingdom of the Lord ſtands not in any outward things, but in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Alas, if any of us were condemned to Death, lying in Priſon, looking for nothing but preſent execution, what could do us good? There were then no joy in Wife, nor children, lands, nor livings, meat nor muſick; No, no, unleſs we have the Kings pardon, we cannot be merry, but would contemn all thoſe things: Even juſt ſo, when a poor ſinner is arraigned, and condemned in his own conſcience for his offences, hath no feeling of Gods love and mercy

Uſe 2.

Rom. 14. 17.

cy for the remiſſion of them, how is it poſſible that he ſhould have one dram of joy, till the Lord in mercy ſeal to his poor ſoul a general pardon by his Spirit, dipped in the blood of Jeſus Chriſt? Well, then let us never be at peace, nor give any reſt unto our ſouls, until we have got a comfortable perſwaſion of Gods mercy for pardon of our ſins.

That the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.

Second part of the Verſe.

THeſe words contain in them the ſecond part of this Verſe; and is as much, as if the Prophet ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, I intreat thee for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, to forgive me my hainous and bloody ſins, and give me the bleſſed aſſurance of the ſame in my ſoul and conſcience; that ſo feeling and finding that thou art reconciled, and haſt pardoned my ſins, my ſoul which is wounded and overwhelmed with grief and ſorrow, as my bones and moſt ſtrong parts are waſted and conſumed, and my ſtrength decayed, may be reſtored, cheared up, and gladded.

Pſal. 32. 3, 4.

By this ſpeech he would ſhew his extream grief, and ſorrow for his ſins, which was ſo extream, that it waſted and conſumed his ſtrength, dried up his bones, and ſpent his marrow.

Doct. 5. *No ſorrow in the godly like the ſorrow for ſin.*

Hence we ſee, that there is no ſorrow to the heart of Gods children like that ſorrow which is for ſin, and offendeth our moſt gracious God, and merciful Father. Great is the grief of an Husband, that loſeth a kind and

and virtuous Wife; And who can expreſs the ſorrow of a Father, or Mother, for the death of their dear and only child? But yet all the ſorrow in the World is not to be compared unto the ſorrow and grief of heart for ſin: This will wound the very conſcience, and cauſe much weeping and wailing, and great heavineſs; it will even weaken the body and ſtrength of Nature; and if it be of any long continuance, it will waſte the bones and conſume away the fleſh: *When I held my tongue, my bones were conſumed.* *Luk.* 16. 2. *Pſal.* 32. *Pſal.* 6. 2. *Pſal.* 33.

And the reaſon is this, becauſe a poor ſinner, being wounded in conſcience for ſin, and not feeling the love and mercy of God for pardon, ſees nothing but Hell, nothing but damnation, and the wrath of God, which is a fearful thing; for this cauſeth torments, and fears, and terrors, and makes even a Hell in a wounded conſcience: And of all plagues and judgments, what can be more terrible and fearful, than to ſee the heavy weight and burthen of Gods anger, which is unſupportable? For as *Solomon* ſaith, *A man may bear his ſickneſs, and infirmity, but a wounded conſcience who can bear?* Again, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* *Prov.* 18. 14. *Heb.* 10. 12.

Seeing this is the woful fruit of ſin, that it thus woundeth the conſcience, and waſteth the fleſh, and the bones; we ſee how God hateth ſin, even in his deareſt children, ſo as if they will needs ſin and rebel againſt God, they muſt feel the woful and terrible ſmart of it. And therefore, let us above all things ſhun it, avoid it, not dare to commit it: *Uſe* 1.

Oh,

Oh, it will coſt thee dear; it will make thy heart to ake, it will breed thee much woe and miſery in ſoul and body.

Uſe 2. We ſee the miſerable blockiſhneſs of all carnal men and women, who are not aſhamed to ſay, that they had rather deal with God than with men for ſin: But alas, they never knew nor felt the weight of ſin, but if God ſhould once open their eyes, and let them ſee their ſins, and feel the weight of his anger for them. O then they will confeſs, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God. *If he be angry,* (ſaith *David*) *bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him.*

Uſe 3. Let us learn, that it is not ſome light ſorrow, or ſmall ſigh, or, Lord have mercy upon me, will ſerve for our ſins againſt God: No, no, let us labour to be humbled more deeply for our tranſgreſſions, ſeeing by them we offend a moſt merciful God; yea, if it were poſſible to ſhed even tears of blood for our offences; for all were little enough to ſhew or expreſs that grief for ſin we ſhould or ought to have.

Which thou haſt broken.

Doct. 6r *There is no reſpect of perſons with God.*

THat is, which thou, O God, my Lord, in juſtice haſt juſtly inflicted upon me, for my great and grievous offences.

Hence then behold, that God is moſt righteous and juſt in puniſhing, and correcting the iniquities of men: He cannot wink at ſin in any man, no, not in them that be dear and near unto him, as may appear in his holy Servant *David*, a man after his own heart,

heart, a holy Prophet of the Lord; yet, if he rebel, and play the wanton, he is ſure to be ſcourged for it, as here in this place: ſo when he numbered the people; ſo *Hezekiah*, *Jeruſalem* the holy City; yea, if the Son of the Almighty, which had no ſin, take but our iniquities upon him, he muſt be puniſhed, the juſtice of God will ſeize upon him. And the reaſon of this is manifeſt, becauſe God doth ſo hate ſin, that he cannot wink at it in any. 1 *Sam.* 24. *Iſa.* 39. *Mat.* 23.

If the Lord doth ſo ſharply and ſeverely puniſh iniquity in his deareſt children, whom he loves beſt, Oh then what will become of all thoſe that are his enemies. *If to the green Tree, what to the dry?* If Judgments begin at the houſe of God, Oh then, what ſhall be the end of thoſe that obey not the Word of God: If God do ſo ſeverely handle his own people, then much more the wicked and prophane ones. *Uſe* 4. 1 *Pet.* 4. 17. *Jer.* 20. 29.

May rejoyce.

HEnce we learn, that there is wonderful joy and gladneſs, in the hearts of all thoſe who have the pardon of their offences: It is a matter of endleſs comfort to feel the love of the Almighty in a mans ſoul; to know God to be my gracious Father, Jeſus Chriſt to be my Redeemer, and the Holy Ghoſt to be my comforter, it is matter of endleſs comfort; *Bleſſed is he whoſe wickedneſs is forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered.* Again, *the Kingdom of God ſtands not in meat and drink, but in Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Doct. 7. *Pardon of ſin brings true joy.* *Pſal.* 32. *Rom.* 14. 17.

We

We learn hence, that ſuch as continue in any known ſin unrepented of, cannot look for peace from God; for where goes ſin there goes the curſe, *Iſa.* 48. *There is no peace to the wicked*: God doth even wage war, and enter into a combat againſt all impenitent ſinners. This the Prophet ſpeaketh, *Pſa.* 7. God doth whet his Sword, bend his Bow, and make it ready againſt the wicked; and therefore if we want this, and have not the feeling of Gods love, and aſſurance of his mercy for the pardon of all our offences. O then let us labour for it, uſe all means to attain it, pray for it, and give no reſt unto thy ſoul until thou haſt it; and if thou haſt it, Oh then make much of it, loſe it not though thou mighteſt gain a Kingdom; for all the World will not afford one dram of comfort without it; and take heed of ſin, which will drive it away, dim it, and damp it, and deprive us of the feeling of it.

Uſe 2. We often ſee, that ungodly men offer great wrong unto the children of the Lord. Oh, ſay prophane Beaſts and Athieſts, theſe Profeſſors, theſe Puritans, they are alwayes heavy and dumpiſh, there is no comfort, no joy, no true mirth in them, they are always ſad and heavy. I tell thee thou art deceived, they have more ſound joy, and true Chriſtian mirth in one hour, than the wicked Atheiſts of the world have in a whole year. Yea, who ſhould be merry, if the Children and Servants of God be not merry? Who can rejoyce more than he that is the Child of God, that feels Gods love and favour in his ſoul,

ſoul, is a Member of Jeſus Chriſt, and to whom there is no fear of condemnation. *Rom. 8.1.*

It is true indeed in regard of our ſins and offences, we have cauſe to mourn and lament yea, to weep, if it were poſſible, tears of blood; but in regard of Gods mercy, in that we be reconciled to God, deliver'd from Death, Hell and damnation, by the Death and Merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, in whom we believe we can be merry, yea, rejoyce in all eſtates, in ſickneſs as well as in health; in poverty, as plenty; in priſon, as in liberty. Look on *Peter* in priſon, *Paul* in the Stocks; whereas wicked men have only a carnal and worldly joy in their friends, riches, honours, pleaſures and delights; if theſe be gone and loſt, and their joy lies in the duſt, then they are dumpiſh, heavy, and ſad; no joy then, no rejoicing, but a Knife, a Halter, a Pond; even become in a melancholly humour, their own Judge and Executioner.

So that, by this we ſee a clear and notable difference between the joy of wicked men, and the joy of Gods children. The joy of wicked men it is carnal, and worldly, and earthly; the joy of Gods children is ſpiritual, inward, and heavenly; theirs is only in time of proſperity; but the joy of Gods children is durable, permanent, laſting for ever in Life and Death; whereas the joy of wicked men ends even in Death, and with horrour of Conſcience.

VERSE

VERSE IX.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

David can no way have peace till his sins be pardoned.

IN these words *David* doth the third time, renew his former Petition and suit unto God for the pardon of his sins, as one wonderfully amazed, and cast down in the sense and feeling of Gods anger for his sins.

Parts of the verse.

And the request hath two parts: First, because he had provoked the Lord to anger and was in danger of his displeasure, he intreats him to turn away his angry countenance from beholding his sins. As if he should have said, Oh Lord I have committed great and grievous sins in thy sight, and given thee cause to be angry with me: But Lord, I beseech thee cast away my sins out of thy sight, look not on them, neither call them to account, but put them all out of mind.

Secondly, he intreats the Lord to blot them out of his book of remembrance; alluding to them that keep a Book of debt, who write all down that is owing unto them, and in token all is discharged, blot and cross the book: So he requests the Lord to cross the book of debt, because he was not able to pay the debt; therefore he requireth that he would in the blood of the promised Messiah be content to blot the book of his account.

When as *David* prays to God, that he would turn away his face, that is, that he would not call his sins to mind to punish them but forget and forgive them, and as it were, cast

caſt them behind his back, as men uſe to do with things they will not remember; Hence we may learn, that there is nothing ſo fearful unto us poor diſtreſſed ſinners, as is the terrible anger and frowning countenance of the moſt righteous God, which if a man beholdeth, and ſeeth the Lord to frown upon him, it is impoſſible that all the creatures in heaven and earth ſhould give him any comfort: No, *David* a King, being in danger of his juſt anger for ſin, could have no joy nor comfort until he was reconciled unto God, and did behold his loving countenance turned toward him, in and by the means of Jeſus Chriſt, and through a lively faith.

Doct. 1. *Gods anger moſt fearful to the godly.*

1 *Cor.* 16. 5. *Pſal.* 5. 5. *Pſ.* 45. 7.

And no marvel, though the Prophet intreated the Lord to turn away his angry face; for ſo the anger of God is moſt terrible, yea, more heavy than if mil ſtone, yea, Heaven and Earth ſhould be laid upon a mans ſoul: For, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *if God be with us who can be againſt us?* ſo, if he be againſt us, who can be with us? *It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands.* And if the wrath of the King be as the roaring of a Lyon, how much more is the wrath of God to be feared, who can caſt both body and ſoul into Hell?

Rom. 8. 3.

Heb. 10.

Mat. 5. 50.

Yea, ſo long as the children of the Almighty enjoy his favour, ſee his loving countenance, they are able to endure much; though men torment them, perſecute them, rail on them, they can endure much miſery; but if once they loſe the feeling of Gods love, and ſee his angry face, and frowning countenance turned towards them, Oh then nothing can comfort them, till they obtain his favour again,

Job 13. 15. again, how many things did *Job* ſuffer without impatiency, yea, the loſs of all he had, ſo long as he felt the loving favour of God towards him; but when he ſeeth the Lord to arm himſelf like an enemy, and like an angry God, then he was no longer able to endure? And what can be more terrible to a poor ſinner, than to wraſtle with the anger of God, than which nothing is more fearful? And this can every child of God teſtifie in his own conſcience by experience, fearing the heavy weight of the Lords anger.

Pſ. 6. 31.

Uſe 1. Seeing it is ſo fearful a thing for man to provoke the Lord to wrath, and behold his angry and frowning countenance; This condemns the blockiſhneſs and ſenſeleſs ſecurity in moſt folks, who, though they do nothing but ſin againſt God daily, and ſo provoke him to anger and wrath againſt them, yet do not ſo much as ſay, *Alas, what have I done?* though they lie ſmoaking under the heavy wrath of God, to be deſtroyed for their ſins. Men fear the wrath and terrible face of great Men, eſpecially their Prince; but hard-hearted tranſgreſſors fear not the wrath of the Eternal God. Well, let all rebellious and ſtiff-necked men remember what Chriſt ſaith, *Fear not him that can kill the body, and can do no more; but I will tell you whom you ſhall fear, fear him that can kill both body and ſoul, and can caſt them both into hell fire; fear him.*

Verſe 36.

Uſe 2. Becauſe nothing moves the Lord to anger, and to be diſpleaſed with men and women, but ſin; therefore let us above all things ſhun ſin, not dare to rebel againſt God, and provoke his wrath: *Your ſins have made a ſeparation*

Iſa. 49. 2.

tion. Oh then, take heed of ſin: And if thou wilt offend, be ſure thou ſhalt find and feel the wrath of God; and if thou wouldſt eſcape the wrath which is ſo terrible, take heed of ſin; and eſpecially, if thou haſt ſinned not to lye and continue in ſin: It is that which makes God angry, becauſe we do not repent for ſin. We have ſeen men too careful to ſhun ſuch things as offend great perſons, and procure their diſpleaſure, for fear if they take occaſion againſt them, they'l turn them out of their Farms, rack their Rents, *&c.* Oh then fear to offend God, who will reject and caſt thee off for ever, and encreaſe thy judgment.

Uſe 3. If we have ſinned, and thereby provoked the Lord to anger by our ſins, as *David* did, and feel his diſpleaſure, and ſee his frowning countenance; Oh then, let us give no reſt unto our ſouls, till we be reconciled unto him, till we obtain mercy and favour at his hands: For ſo long as we ſee his anger and frowning countenance, alas, we can have no peace nor comfort in the World. If a man ſhould have the favour of all men, great and ſmall, Nobles, Lords, *&c.* yet if the King hate him, and cannot abide to hear of him, what good can all this do him? So, if a man had the favour of all men and Angels; yea, if it were poſſible, all the things on Earth ſhould ſeek to uphold a man, yet if God be angry, and diſpleaſed with him, his wrath would cruſh him in peices. Well then, when we treſpaſs againſt God, and ſo provoke him to anger let us uſe all means to obtain his favour, let us repent of our ſins, be humbled

for them, acknowledg and confeſs them; let us pray for pardon, and intreat the Lord to turn away his face and angry countenance.

And as we ſee, if a man offend a great perſon, he will ride and run night and day, ſend gifts, make friends, and all to obtain his favour again; even ſo muſt we ſeek for the favour of God. And as *Abſalom*, having ſinned againſt his Father, ſent *Joab*, and the woman of *Tekoah*, to get his pardon, and to appeaſe his Father's anger: So we muſt ſeek to Jeſus Chriſt, to be our Mediator, to turn his Father's anger from us.

2 *Sam.* 22. 4.

Uſe 4. Laſtly, Seeing the anger of God is ſo fearful a thing, and ſo unſupportable, and the loving favour of God is Life it ſelf. Oh then let us make much of Gods loving countenance, and do nothing in word or deed that may turn his mercy or loving favour from us, but uſe all good means poſſible to continue the ſame; for if we love him, he will love us; If he honour him, he will honour us. It muſt be true obedience that we honour God with; for he is the ſearcher and trier of all hearts, whether they be right or no; God trieth our hearts; that is, our love; he trieth our reins, that is, our ſincerity. God knows our words and thoughts long before we utter them; he knoweth the words of our Bed-chamber, which a learned Divine calls twinkling words, though but a whiſper; therefore *David* humbly deſires that the Lord would hide his face from beholding his iniquity.

Hide

Hide thy face from my sins.

THat is, pardon them, and do not call me to account to punish me for them. *Moses* saith, *Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret sins in the sight of thy countenance*: That is, the Lord beheld their sins, that so he might punish them for the same. So when the Lord hideth his Face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them. Now sin is contrary to the essence of God; and if we sin, then follows punishment; for sin and punishment are unseparable companions. Sin is an averting of the heart from the Creator; remove sin, which is the cause of punishment, and the effect will cease. A little Leaven doth leaven the whole lump; so one little sin begets another, and one petty sin destroys the Creature. When a man casteth a thing behind his back, or turns his Face from it, it is a sign he would forget it, and not remember it: Even so, when the Lord hideth his Face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them, as I said before. Again, *I will put away your sins, and scatter them as a mist, saith the Lord*; and we know that mists that appear a little time, are by and by scattered and gone. *Hezekiah* confesseth, *That God did cast all his sins behind his back*; alluding to men, who when they purpose to forget, or not to remember a thing, turn their backs upon it. Again, *I will cast all their sins into the bottom of the Sea*, alluding to *Pharaoh*, that wicked man, whom God drowned in the bottom of the *Red-Sea*. And thus we

Isa. 39.17

Micah. 7. 19.

have the interpretation of the words.

Doct. 2. *Note how God pardons sins.*

Here we see how, and after what manner the Lord pardons our sins; namely, when he doth forgive and forget them, and turn his face from them, hath no purpse to remember them, or to punish us for them: And in a word, when he doth upon our true repentance, for the merits of Christ, esteem sin as no sin, as though it had never been committed; when he covers them, and imputeth them not unto us. Indeed every sin that we commit, is a falling from God, and a step from grace.

Psal. 32. 12.

Use 1.

Seeing the Lord forgiveth sin after this manner, and even doth in mercy forgive and forget our sins, puts them out of his remembrance, casts them behind his back, and will never call them to mind any more: Here is matter of joy, and endless comfort to distressed souls; if thou hast once repented of thy sins truly, and been assured of God of the pardon of them, though thou maist remember them, and thy conscience accuse thee for them, as *Job* and *David*, who where troubled for the sins of their Youth: yet I say, thou shouldst remember them. God will never remember them any more to judgment or condemnation, nor plague, nor punish thee for them: He casts them out of his mind, and turns his face from them; and therefore, if he once pardon sin, he pardoned it for ever: *For the decree and counsel of God is unchangeable*, he alters not; and therefore, if once he gives pardon for sin, he never revokes it, but loves to the end, *The gifts of God are without repentance.*

Rom. 11. 29.

See.

Seeing the Lord in pardoning of ſins, doth turn his face from them, forgets them, and forgives them, and will never ſpeak of them, nor call them to mind any more; We learn hence, in pardoning of wrongs and injuries done to us, to imitate the example of God our heavenly Father, to pardon them ſo as we never call them to mind again, that we forgive and forget all wrongs and injuries, trample them under our feet. But it is a Common ſpeech of many ungodly men and women, if any do them any harm or injury, they will forgive them, but they will never forget them; and accordingly ſo they deal, though for a time they can ſhew a ſmooth countenance, and give fair words, yet if ever they get them in their danger, they will fetch them over, they will ſhew their ſpleen and malice, and pour out all their poyſon. But let ſuch take heed, for how can they ſay, *forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*, and yet do not forgive and forget wrongs? If the Lord ſhould deal thus with us, he ſhould confound us: For God is provoked by us every moment, and we are indebted unto him ten thouſand Talents, yet he is intreated of us and he is reconciled unto us; ought not we therefore to forgive one another, after his example? This is the reaſon uſed by the Apoſtle *Paul, Col.* 3. 12, 13. *Now therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, put on the bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel to another; even* *Uſe* 2.

as Christ forgave, even so do ye. It were woful with us, if God were not ready to forgive, for we find our selves ready to offend; and one sin unpardoned is sufficient to make us condemned. The second branch of the Petition is in the end of the Verse, in these words immediately following.

And blot out all mine Iniquities, &c.

First part of the Verse.

THat is, blot them out of thy Book of Accounts, and that Bill and Debt-book wherein they seem to be written or engraven, for so much doth the speech import: The Prophet alluding to men that keep books of Accounts, wherein they write all their Debts; even so the Lord hates, as it were his Books of Accounts, wherein are Registred all the sins of men and women, when, and where, and howsoever committed.

Doct. 3. All our sins are known to God. Rev. 20.

Then hence we learn, *that all our sins are known to God,* he hath them all (as it were) written down in a Book of Account, and unless they be blotted out in this Life, they shall one day be called over, even at the day of Judgment, *The books shall be opened,* and every man's conscience shall be a Bill of Indictement to accuse and condemn him. This is that which is told us by the Prophet *Jeremiah,* ch. 16. *The sin of Judah is written with a Pen of iron, and the point of a Diamond:* And *Job* hath it, *Thou hast sealed up our sins in a bag.* By all which places it appeareth, that all our sins are known to God, as perfectly as if they were noted in a Book;

a Book; and unleſs we repent, they ſhall one day be called over, and laid to our charge, when our book ſhall be opened.

Seeing that all our ſins are well known to God, and the Lord hath them (all as it were) written down in a book, and this book ſhall one day be opened; and if our ſins be not blotted out before Death come, and this Debt be not cancelled, then they ſhall be brought to light, and we ſhall be caſt into Priſon till we have paid the uttermoſt farthing; Then we ſee it ſtands us all in hand, while we live, to labour to have this Book cancelled, that our ſins may be put out, and all debts croſſed: For if they be found uncancelled, and at the day of Judgment, if they be found then upon record, ſurely then it is too late to look for mercy, or cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; and therefore it is a matter of endleſs moment, which we are all moſt carefully to think upon, that this Book may be croſſed, and our ſins cancelled, ſo that we be not in the great day of the general Judgment called to an account for them. *Uſe* 1.

But how might we do, that we might have our offences blotted out? We are not able to pay the Debt, we owe the Lord ten thouſand Talents, and cannot pay one penny; what ſhall we do to have the whole ſum paid?

To this I anſwer: The Lord is like a merciful Creditor, if his Debtor be not able to pay, let him confeſs the Debt, and he will

ask him no more, but will willingly and freely pardon all: So the Lord God seeing that we are by no means able of our selves to pay the Debt, yet if we confess it, and desire pardon, he will forgive it. And yet because he is just, as he is merciful, therefore we must needs look for this, that his Justice should be satisfied, and that is done by the means of his Son Jesus Christ; he is become our surety, he is content to take our debt to him, to become Pay-Master, and so when nothing else could do it, he was content to suffer Death, even the cursed Death of the Cross, and to wash away our sins by his own heart blood.

So then, we see the means how our sins are blotted out, Namely, when we do but repent of them, bewail them, be humbled for them, leave and forsake them, lay hold on Jesus Christ, and apply unto us his death and passion; then by the blood of Christ all our sins shall be washed away.

VERSE X.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

David's *new Petition.*

David having hitherto craved at the hands of God pardon of his sins, doth here put up a new Petition to God; namely, for Regeneration of the new birth, That God would cast him in a new mould, and make him a new man: And that God would in mercy go forwards with the blessed work of Sanctification begun by his Spirit, and

and now is interrupted by his ſins.

Our reconciliation with God ſtands in two parts: Namely, a pardon of ſin, and regeneration. And *David* having in the former Verſe prayed for grace and mercy, that God would have mercy upon him, pardon his ſins, and waſh them all away in the blood of his Son: Now he doth beg for Regeneration, and encreaſe of the bleſſed Work of Sanctification, which is begun, and continued by the holy Spirit of God: For though the Lord ſhall pardon ſins paſt, yet if he gives not power againſt ſin for time to come, we ſhall mar all quickly, and commit either the ſame again, or elſe ſome greater ſin; therefore he craves power againſt ſin for time to come, that he may not fall into the like again.

Parts of this Verſe.

In the tenth Verſe, there be two things to be conſidered: Firſt, he craveth a ſanctified heart, becauſe till the heart be pure, no good motion can proceed from thence, no more than ſweet water from a bitter fountain: Secondly, he prays for the renewing of the work of grace, or new birth, and Sanctification, which he had by his ſins hindred, yea, greatly interrupted; that ſo his foul and filthy heart being renewed and ſanctified, thence might proceed good affections, and holy actions, with continual and conſtant obedience.

Doct. 1. Juſtification and Sanctification go together.

Whereas the Prophet joyns his Petition of Sanctification unto the former of Juſtification; we learn, that theſe two graces of God's Spirit, Juſtification, pardon of ſins and Sanctification, a godly life, and converſation

ſation, are ſo knit and united together, that they cannot be ſeparated; ſo as no man is truly juſtified by Faith in the blood of Chriſt, but he is alſo ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt: No man can have the pardon of his ſins, but he muſt become a new Creature in Jeſus Chriſt. And this appeareth very plain by St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 5. *ch.* (treating of Juſtification) *verſe* 4, 5. and treating of Sanctification, he ſhews, that theſe two go ever together, ſo as he that is not ſanctified, is not juſtified, and he that is not regenerate, and born anew by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and the work of the Spirit, cannot have remiſſion of his ſins.

Seeing juſtification and pardon of our ſins, and Sanctification, and newneſs of life, cannot be ſevered in the children of God, no more than fire and heat; then men had need to take heed, leſt they deceive themſelves while they ſay, *God is merciful, and they hope all their ſins are pardoned in the blood of Chriſt.* But unleſs thou be truly ſanctified, unleſs thou be a new creature in Jeſus Chriſt, that canſt have no aſſurance of thy juſtification, and pardon of thy ſins: And therefore, if thou live in ſin, delight in ſin, have no change, no new birth, no reformation of thy heart, certainly, thou haſt no remiſſion of thy ſins as yet, and thy hope is but a fooliſh and vain fancy of thine own heart.

Uſe 2. Hence we learn, to try the aſſurance of our Salvation by the fruit of our Sanctification: For hereby we may aſſure our ſelves that we are juſtified, if we lead a ſanctified

Life

Life. If we have our conversation in holiness, we shall then have in the end everlasting life, 2 *Tim.* 2. 29. The Apostle sheweth there. *That the foundation of the Lord stands sure, so that the Lord knoweth who are his.* He sheweth also how we shall know that we are the Lords even by this, every one for his own assurance, must depart from iniquity; and this is confirmed by that of St. *John*, 1 John 1. 6, 7. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* Oh then, as we glory in the name of Christians, and would be accounted Christ's, let us be careful to bring forth the Fruits of Christians, and to lead a sanctified Life; for God hath joined these two together, so that not all the wit and policy of man whatsoever, is able to separate them.

Create in me a clean heart.

TO *Create*, is to make a thing of nothing, as God *Created the World*; that is, he made all things of nothing. Hence then learn, that it is as great a work to create a new heart, and so to save a sinner, as to create the whole World, of nothing, yea, in some respects it seems harder: For in the creation of the World, the Lord but spake the Word, and all was made, there was no hinderance, no resistance or opposition, but in the Creation of the heart anew, there are many lets and hindrances.

Doct. 7. *Gen.* 1. 1. *Repentance is a new creature.*

First, within a man; every man is an enemy to his own Salvation, and the Flesh resists

resists this same work: Again, the Devil doth labour to hinder by all means possible, so great a work.

Yea, and besides that, it is a great work to create in a man a new heart. It is also work of great difficulty, not accomplished without great labour and pains, and therefore it is called a Birth, a Death, a Circumcision: So then, even as no Birth, no Death, no cutting off the Flesh, can be without pain and sorrow, so the conversion of a sinner is not wrought without pain and sorrow. The infant is not delivered out of its Mother's womb without pain; and dost thou think (O man) to part with the sin which is in thee, was conceived with thee, and which since thy birth-day, unto this present, thou hast nourished with such delight, and not to taste of pain in the new birth? No assuredly, it will not be, but it will cost thee much sorrow, many a sigh: yea, and tears themselves, before thou hast the same wrought effectually in thee.

Use 1. Seeing it is as hard a thing to have a new and sanctified heart, even as to create the whole world, then we had need to take the greater pains about it, to use all means that God hath appointed: Namely, the Word preached, the Sacraments, prayer, Meditation in the Law of God, and to cry unto God for the same continually.

Job. 17. 17. *Acts* 15. 9.

Use 2. We see that there is nothing in man of himself that is pleasing unto God; for *David* prays to have a new heart created in him; and therefore there is no Will nor Motion in any man of himself to please God, all

all must be new, yea, till the heart is created anew and sanctified, it is a sink of sin and all uncleannes, full of poysoned lusts and concupiscence, and therefore no freedom of will to any thing that is good, till God create this new heart.

Seeing *David* prayeth to God to create a clean heart within him, it must admonish us all to look unto our hearts that they be clean; for it is the Fountain of all Life and Motion. Now such as the Fountain is, such will the water be; such as the Root is, such will the Fruit be; and if thy heart be evil, it will send forth filthy lusts and desires, And, as our Saviour saith, *Out of the heart come] evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies, slanders; these are the things which defile the man.* Oh then, let us look unto our hearts, and labour for sanctified hearts, intreat the Lord to create them in us, and to take away our stony and corrupt hearts, and to give us good and honest hearts, sanctified by his spirit; for look how our hearts be, so will our thoughts, words and works be: A good heart will have good words, and good deeds: but a stinking and corrupt heart will send forth vile and filthy words. *Use 3.* *Mat. 15. 29.* *Luk. 8.*

Quest. Doth *David* desire no more at all but a clean heart? hath he no care of his words, and of his actions, of his outward life and conversation? *Object.*

Ans. Yea verily *David*, though he names but the heart, yet understands the whole man both outward and inward; but because that is the Fountain of all, therefore the names *Answ.*

that

that; and if the heart be pure, it will make the whole man good: For the heart of a man is like the great wheel of a clock, it is the first mover either to good or ill.

Doct. 3. *True sanctification is never in part.* 1 *Thess.* 5 23.

Hence mark, that in true Sanctification, where the work is truly wrought, it is not only outward in word or deed, but it is inward, and of the whole man; both body and soul, heart, will, judgment, affection, conscience, words and works. *The God of peace sanctifie you throughout*: So that the mind, which by nature is full of blindness and ignorance, is enlightned by the true knowledg of God revealed in his Word; the Will flyeth evil, and embraceth that is good; the affections are purged from Rebellion; yea every part and faculty, both of body and soul, is sanctified; *So that as we have given up our members servants to unrighteousness, to work sin; now they become servants of righteousness to holiness*: Yea, the Body is now a fit Temple for the Holy Ghost, fit to perform all duties to Gods glory, and the edifying of our brethren. And therefore this must be remembred, that he which is truly sanctified, is wholly sanctified throughout in soul and body.

Rom. 6. 10

Use 1. This shews, how thousands in the World be in a miserable case; for (alas) they seem to be religious, and yet are not truly sanctified, for they live in some sin or other. With *Herod* they cherish and nourish in their bosoms many sinful and rebellious lusts and desires. Well, if thy tongue be not sanctified to cease from ill words, and to speak well, if thy hands, or eyes, or ears, *&c.*

Mat. 12. *Note this well.*

i.

if thou be not ſanctified throughout in every part, there is no true work of Grace, no ſound ſanctification; for where it hath true operation, or working, there will be a change in all parts and powers of the ſoul and body. *Jam.* 1.

Let us labour to be aſſured of this bleſſed work of Sanctification, in that we perceive our ſelves purged throughout our Minds, Will, Affection, Reaſon, Conſcience; our Tongue, Hands, Feet, that we deny any ſervice to ſin and Satan, and do willingly conſecrate all to God: For if we keep one part, and neglect another, it will profit no more, than to ſet a ſtrong defence at one part of a Caſtle, and neglect the reſt; or to ſhut one Gate, and let the reſt ſtand wide open. *Uſe* 2.

Now, that we may the better diſcern our eſtate, whether the ſound work of grace be wrought in us, or no; and whether God hath ſanctified our hearts truly, or no; we ſhall know it by theſe three fruits of Sanctification, which are ever found in all them that be truly ſanctified. *Notes to know whether this change is wrought in us, or no.*

Firſt, a deteſtation and earneſt loathing of our former ſins, in which we have delighted and taken pleaſure in, with an hearty love of righteouſneſs and holineſs, and newneſs of Life: So as we are loath to offend God in any thing, and are moſt careful to pleaſe him in all things; when as we carry a purpoſe not to ſin, but can ſay, *I delight in the Law of God in the inward man*, though we fall by the infirmity of our own fleſh. *Rom.* 7. 22

Secondly, when we find in our ſelves, that from this love of that is good, and hatred of evil,

evil, we find an earneſt deſire in our hearts to embrace the one, and to fly the other; ſo that from this deſire there ariſes a ſettled purpoſe in heart, and a careful endeavour in Life to mortifie our corrupt nature, to ſubdue the fleſh, and in time to come to frame our lives in all things according to the rule of Gods holy Word: And that we not only deſire this, but uſe all the bleſſed means as the Word, Sacrament, Prayer, and Meditation, to perform it,

Thirdly, Another fruit is this: Namely, when as we find in us this deſire, (to do well, and purpoſe, and heartily endeavour to kill ſin, and live to God) 'tis hindered by our ſpiritual enemies, the Devil, World, and the Fleſh; that when we find a grief of heart, a ſpiritual combate between the Fleſh, and the Spirit, whereby we ſtrive and ſtruggle to prevail againſt our ſpiritual enemies and to overcome them; Then there is wonderful peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Well then, let all men try themſelves, whether God hath by his Spirit truly wrought the work of Sanctification, or not: Firſt, doſt thou hate thy former ſins, and loath them as bane and poyſon, yea, as the Devil himſelf? And doth thy heart love Heavenly duties, Holy and Righteous, which before thou foundeſt bitter? Secondly, doſt thou deſire and endeavour to kill thy corruptions, to ſubdue and mortifie thy luſts and deſires? And doſt thou endeavour to frame thy Life according to the Rule of God's Holy Word, and makeſt that thy only guide?

Third.

Thirdly, Doſt thou grieve at thy faults and infirmities, ſhunneſt the occaſion of ſin, and doſt wraſtle againſt all the temptations of Satan? And doſt rejoyce in nothing more than to prevail and get the victory? Theſe be good ſigns and fruits of Sanctification; but be they wanting, thou canſt not be aſſured thou art truly Sanctified, or haſt any true work of grace as yet begun in thy heart. A ſinners converſion muſt be true and firm; not for a little, or ſmall ſpace; but daily and hourly. Our actions of Repentance muſt be renewed continually; *Naaman* muſt waſh ſeven times in *Jordan* before he can be clean; we every minute ſin, and therefore the greater need we have to repent; and weep as often; God requires an univerſal Reformation; then Repentance is happy, when it hath been as large as our tranſgreſſions.

For exhortation.

Our heart, that little member muſt be waſhed, and purged, from murders, thefts, and adulteries. *Pilate* he uſed an outward and a diſſembling kind of waſhing, when his heart condemned Chriſt: But let us waſh our eyes from luſts and deſires of the fleſh; our tongue from unclean ſpeeches: our heads from plots of device; our hearts from pride and envy: All ſins are ſpots and blemiſhes, no ſin muſt be left unwaſhed: We waſh daily, but we do not waſh all; we muſt waſh our affections daily, and then we waſh as we ought. We muſt give the Lord preſent obedience: Let us not venture to ſleep till we have waſhed and cleanſed our hearts, and caſt up our reckonings with God, for the day paſt; for the moſt righteous man that liveth ſin-

sinneth seven times a day; and therefore ought not we to take account of our actions and words in the day, as well as we cast up our takings in the Shop-book, what we have sold and got in the day? O let us by all means take heed, in not having our hearts here with *David*, purged and washed; lest snatched away by Death on a sudden, like *Herod*, and like *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, we be killed in the very act of our sins. Therefore let us desire the Lord so to prosper our intentions, that we may daily wash our selves with true Repentance; saying with *David*,

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Doct. 4. *God the Author of Sanctification.* 1 Thess. 5. 23. Joh. 1. 13.

HEnce we learn who is the Authour of this work of Sanctification: Namely, it is the proper work of the third person in Trinity, the Holy Ghost, he doth sanctifie the Elect. *The very God of peace sanctifie you throughout.* The faithful are begotten, *Not of flesh and blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

This work of Sanctification cannot flow from our Parents; *For who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness?* The new birth is not of blood, nor of the Will of the flesh, nor of man, but of Christ, who, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *is made unto us Sanctification,* Col. 1. 19. *In him are hid all the treasures of it.* John 3. 16. *Of whose fulness we receive grace for grace.*

Ezek. 36. 26.

Again it is said, *A new heart will I give them, and a new spirit will I put into them; And I will take away their stony hearts, and give them hearts of flesh*: God the Father sanctifieth

ctifieth in giving his Son Christ unto us; so Christ sanctifieth in washing us from our sins in his blood; and the Holy Ghost in applying Christ Jesus, his Death and Resurrection, to us: And thus the work of Regeneration, or Sanctification, is by God wrought alone in the Elect. God created man without his help, but he will not save us without our help; and the reason is good, because he hath given man the means and ability to step forwards towards Salvation; and that man that doth not go forward, goes backwards.

Well then, this shews that man hath no freedom of will in heavenly things pertaining to eternal Life, but all is of God; Faith, Salvation, Life eternal, all comes from God; and therefore let us use all good means appointed of God, and seek this at his hands, who alone can, and will do it.

Now follows the second part of the verse; *And renew a right spirit within me*: Where *David* craves Grace from God to become a new creature, and withal, that God would enable him by his Spirit to be faithful and constant in time to come; and therefore requires of God a stable mind, a firm Spirit; that is, not only a constant purpose to walk uprightly with God, but power and strength from his Spirit, to become faithful and constant; as fearing his own weakness, if the Lord should leave him to himself; for as God gives grace to obey, so he must give grace to persevere. As if he would have said; O Lord, thou hast begun this blessed work of Regeneration, and new Birth, by the holy Spirit; but I, like a sinful wretch, by sin and

2 Part of this verse.

and Rebellion have hindred the ſame, and broken off the gracious work of thy holy Spirit: Now, I beſeech thee, O Lord, lay to thy hand again, and afreſh begin to renew the work of thy Spirit, even the bleſſed work of the new Birth; and withal grant, that in time to come, I may be ſtrengthned in the inner man by thy holy Spirit, and may be made thereby firm and conſtant to continue; yea, to grow, and hold out to the end, in holy Obedience.

Doct. 5. *The ſin of man breaks off the work of Sanctification.*

Mark, that *David* acknowledgeth he had broken off the work of God his Spirit in him, and interrupted the ſame, and hindered the work of Sanctification by his ſins, and diſobedience. And therefore we learn, that after God hath touched a man's heart to repent, and ſanctified him by his Spirit, if he ſin, and rebel againſt God, he doth what lies in him to cut off the work of Grace, and to hinder the work of his Salvation, and break off the gracious work of Sanctification and new Birth; and if the Almighty ſhould leave him, he ſhould fall clean away from Grace: For the Spirit of God is glad, and joyful, when as we are careful to avoid all thoſe ways which offend God, and wound our Souls; when we ſeek to have good hearts, faith unfeigned, and a good Conſcience, then the Spirit of God doth daily proceed with the work of the new Birth and Sanctification; but after we rebel againſt God, and commit ſin, we grieve the holy Spirit of God, and vex him, that he is compelled by our lewdneſs to leave off the work in the midſt, becauſe we ſuffer not our ſelves to be wrought

wrought upon, but we will follow our own lusts and liking; and when the Spirit of God ceaseth to renew us, and to beget our hearts to God, then there ariseth blindness of mind, so as we cannot conceive and feel the love of God, as in *David*: And then this gracious work of the Spirit being interrupted there arises grief and sorrow of soul and conscience. *Eph.* 4. 30.

Well, seeing this is the fruit of our sins against knowledge and conscience, they hinder the work of Grace and New Birth, and interrupt the blessed work of Sanctification, begun by Gods Spirit, and bring blindness of mind, and hardness of heart: Oh then, let us take heed of sin, intreat the Lord that he would give us grace for ever to hide his word in our hearts, that we might not sin against his Majesty, and that he would not leave us to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, but that he would rather continue his love and mercy unto us, and that his holy Spirit would daily proceed with the blessed work of Sanctification, and renewing of our souls unto Holiness, and Righteousness *Use* 1.

So often as we be tempted to sin let us remember, that if we yeild unto it, we shall hinder the blessed work of God's Spirit, hinder our new Birth and Sanctification, and thereby do what lies in our power to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause him to leave off the happy work of Regeneration. *Use* 2.

When *David* intreateth the Lord that he would renew a constant and stable Spirit in him; he shews, that he was greatly afraid of his own weakness, and therefore desires strength *Use* 3. *Good to fear our weakniss.*

ſtrength from God to hold out and perſevere in obedience, even unto the end: That God would by his Spirit give him a conſtant purpoſe and continual endeavour both in heart and life to do his Will; and therefore we learn from him to ſuſpect our ſelves, to fear our own weakneſs and infirmity, if the Lord ſhould leave us to our ſelves; *Bleſſed is the man that fears always; but he that hardneth his heart, ſhall run into all evil ways.* For ſuch is our weakneſs, that we are ready to fall into the ſelf-ſame ſin from the which we are eſcaped, if the Lord do but a little leave us to our ſelves; This doth the Prophet teach, *Pſ.* 78. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderneſs, and grieve him in the Deſert?* Thus did *Pharaoh*; Exod. 9. 27. *I have ſinned, and the Lord is righteous, but I and my people are ſinful.* But when the Judgment was removed, his heart was hardned again, and he continued in his ſin: We ſee this in the example of the *Iſraelites. Jud.* 3. They committed evil again and again, they fell into Idolatry, they knew it was a ſin, yea, and they had experience of Gods ſeverity againſt it: For all that, they fell again into the ſame ſin, and ſo provoked the Lord to puniſh them. So Heb. 6. *Many ſin again after the receiving and acknowledging of the Truth.* So that, except the Lord uphold, and ſtay men back, they will fall into the ſame ſin they before committed, and ſo provoke the Lord afreſh to puniſh them.

Prov. 18. 14.

Oh then, let us fear our weakneſs; if *David*, a worthy Prophet, a man after God's heart, prayeth thus, *That God would eſtabliſh him*

him with his free Spirit; that is, give him a constant purpose and endeavour to continue in obedience, how much more have we need to do the same, knowing how weak we are, how many enticements we have to sin, how cuuning the Devil is, in using the World and the Flesh, as so many enemies to fight against us? Well, let us fear the worst, and doubt our weakness, and it will make us more careful to avoid sin, and the occasions of sin; for seldom shall a man fall into that sin which he doth truly fear to commit.

As we are to fear our own weakness, and infirmity, so we must intreat the Lord that he would never leave us to our selves, but that he would give us his stable and constant Spirit; or, as *Paul* prays for, *That God would strengthen us by his Spirit in the inner man*, that he might not only begin well, but continue, by constant perseverance, in obedience all our days: For if the Lord leave us, alas, we shall easily fall flat to the ground. Even as a staff in a mans hand, so long as it is staied, it stands, but if it be left alone, it falls to the ground; so it is with us, and therefore let us not presume of our own strength or power; but suspect it, and pray to God to renew his constant and stable Spirit in us.

Here is matter of great comfort to the children of God, that fall of weakness, and infirmity to the same offence after repentance, and such is the depth of Satans temptations, that he tells them, that the children of God fall not into the same sin again, after their Repentance: If they do, he then tell- *Use 5.*

telleth them, that there is no place for a ſecond Repentance: But this is falſe, for the promiſes of God are without limitation of times, or conſideration of ſins, or reſpect of perſons: He will receive to his mercy all repentant ſinners, whether their ſins be committed before or after repentance, whether once or often; ſo that they renew their Repentance according as they have ſinned anew. This pardon Chriſt himſelf publiſheth, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you*: Yea, the Lord enjoyneth us ſinful men, *Luk.* 17. *To forgive our brother ſeventy times ſeven times, if he turn again, and ſay, it repenteth me.* So that we ſee, this is a marvellous comfort to all ſuch as groan under the burden of their ſins, that have fallen through infirmity into one ſin often; let not ſuch be diſcouraged, but aſſure themſelves, that albeit, with *Peter*, they fall often, yet if with him they repent truly, and weep bitterly for their ſins, the Lord is merciful to forgive them their ſins; nor that we ſhould live proudly, preſumptuouſly, ſtubbornly, and obſtinately againſt him, but if we fall through frailty: For *Pſ.* 130. *The Lord knoweth whereof we be made, he remembreth that we are but duſt.*

Doct. 6. *The child of God is not always at one ſtay.*

When *David* prayeth to be renewed, and to recover his former feeling and comfort: Hence we learn, that the Child of God is not always at one ſtay, but there is an interchange in the Faith of a Chriſtian man or woman; ſometimes full of comfort, joy, and peace in conſcience; and ſometimes again heavy and ſad, yea, full of ſorrow and perplexity: E-

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ven as a man in an Ague, ſometimes ſick, and ſometimes well; and, as it is with Trees, ſometimes Winter, and ſometimes Summer; This is the eſtate of all God's children, as *David*, *Joſeph*, *Hezekiah*, *Job*, &c. And continual experience proveth this, that the eſtate of all God's Children ebbs and flows, hath its change: When as they walk directly and upright with God, then they have peace and comfort: but when they ſtart aſide, and commit ſome ſin, then they find torments of conſcience and grief of mind.

This ſhews us what is the eſtate and condition of the child of God in this Life: He is not here ſo ſanctified, as that he feels no corruption of ſin to hang about him; but rather ſuch a one as feels the burthen of his corruptions, hindring him in this his courſe of Chriſtianity, under which he ſighs and groans, labouring by all good means to be disburdened. Indeed it is a matter of great comfort to feel the graces of Gods Spirit, as Faith, Love, *&c.* but no child of God can always feel the comfort of grace, but as fire that is raked up in the aſhes, it is hid from his feeling for a time, but at length it will break out again, to his great joy and comfort. *Uſe* 1.

Well ſeeing this is the eſtate of God's children here, that ſometimes they find great peace and comfort, ſometimes great grief and ſorrow, let us not be too much diſcouraged, but rather, when as by our falls and ſlips we have weakned our comfort, let us intreat the Lord to renew our comfort again, let us do as a poor Traveller, if he miſs his *Uſe* 2.

way and go out of it, he will haſten into it again, and trudge, and pluck up his heels to recover that he hath loſt: So let us, when we have ſinned, and gone out of the way, make haſt to return; and as a man that hath been long ſick, being grown feeble and weak, he will uſe all means to gather up his crumbs, and to recover his former ſtrength again; So let us, when we have loſt ſome part of our comfort, and Heavenly ſtrength: Let us (I ſay) uſe all bleſſed means, to recover our former health and comfort again: let us pray much, read much, hear often, and meditate much; let us bewail us of our former ſloath, and make more upright ſteps in time to come to Gods Kingdom.

Doct. 2. *A purpoſe not to ſin the marke of a ſanctified heart.* *Pſ.* 50.17. *Mar.* 6.2,

Note hence, That it is the ſpecial fruit and mark of a ſanctified heart, and of the mind renewed, to have a *right Spirit*; that is, a purpoſe not to ſin, but in all things to pleaſe God, and to do his Will, to walk with God in all his Commandments, whereas, on the contrary, when a man hath a purpoſe to live in any known ſin, it is a fearful and manifeſt ſign of a naughty and wicked heart, for when the heart is truly ſanctified, then will be wrought this right Spirit not to tranſgreſs in any thing; I do not ſay, that the man ſanctified and regenerate doth not ſin at all; but he hath no purpoſe to ſin, no delight in ſin, but beareth a conſtant purpoſe in all things to pleaſe God; when he can ſay with *David I have refrained my feet from every evil way*: Again, *He that is born of God ſinneth not*, that is, with full purpoſe of heart, with

Gen. 17.1. *Pſ.* 18.23. 1 *Joh.* 3.9. *Gen.* 39.9.

with delight in ſin; and as they purpoſe ſo they endeavour it, they are afraid, and ſuſpect themſelves, ſhun the occaſion of ſin, ſtrive againſt their corruptions, and Satans temptations.

Uſe 1. This Doctrine doth evidently convince the greateſt number to be ſuch as never had the true work of ſanctification wrought in them: Their hearts be not ſanctified, their minds be not renewed; Why? namely, becauſe they want this mark and fruit of a ſanctified heart. For though they hear of their ſins, be told of them, and the fearful judgments of God denounced againſt them, yet they will not leave them, neither forſake them, but will continue in them; yea, though it coſt them the loſs of God's favour, and the endangering their own ſouls. Let us not deceive our ſelves, let us try our hearts by this rule, whether they be ſanctified, or no: Doſt thou find a diſlike of all ſins, and an hatred of them? Haſt thou a conſtant, and reſolute purpoſe, by the grace of God, to walk before him all thy days? This is the ſign of an upright heart, and that it is ſanctified. And doſt thou find no ſuch reſolution, no ſuch purpoſe, but rather contrary, in a wilful manner to run on in thy old ſins? thou wilt continue in them, let God and man ſay, and do what they can; in lying, ſtealing, drunkenneſs, Whoredom, ignorance, contempt of the Word, *&c.* Say what thou wilt, confeſs what thou wilt, it is a clear caſe thy heart is naught, it is filthy, not ſanctified; for it is impoſſible that a man ſhould have true repentance, and a heart truly ſanctified

and yet have a purpoſe to live in his known ſins. And therefore it convinceth all ſuch as be impenitent, wilful, and notorious hypocrites and ſinners: Yea, if they forſake many of their ſins, and yet purpoſe to live in one, it argueth the heart is not ſanctified: *Herod* left many, yet lived in Inceſt, and the like.

Mark 6. This Doctrine may ſerve for the comfort of God's Children, who are much grieved for their ſins and infirmities, when they fail and come ſhort of good duties, and ſometimes ſtart aſide, as ſaith St. *James, in many things we ſin all; and the juſt man falls ſeven times a day.* But if thou canſt truly ſay, it is againſt my purpoſe, I hate the ſin I commit, I condemn it, I had no purpoſe to do it, my deſire was to pleaſe God, then thou maiſt have comfort, thy heart is ſound, God will not condemn thee for it: *The Lord will ſpare his children, as a Father his only Son.* A Child is going to School, and his purpoſe is ſo to do, in the way he falls into ſome company, and ſtays there too long, and plays the Trevant, but it is againſt his purpoſe: Even ſo the child of God purpoſeth to ſerve God, and to pleaſe him in all things, having no purpoſe to ſin; but by ſome temptations of the Devil, or allurements of the World, is overtaken; *I do the evil I would not, I cannot do the good I would, but I delight in the Law of God concerning the inner man.* This is *Pauls* comfort; and this is the comfort of all God's children, if they can truly ſay, I do the evil I would not, I delight in the Law of God, that God will accept the will for the deed.

Renew

Renew, or refresh a new spirit in me.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I have (by my sins) dimmed thy graces in me, yea, even quenched, and extinguished them, and almost put them clean out; but, Lord, I beseech thee, renew thy graces in me, *Refresh me?* Even as we see a Lamp when all the Oyl, is spent, it twinks, and is almost extinguished, till it be renewed and refreshed with Oyl, it then burns again, and giveth light.

Hence we learn, what is the cursed nature of sin, and the great power of it: Namely, it is as a pail of water cast on the fire, which if it do not quench and extinguish, and put all out, yet it allays the heat of it, even so the graces of God's spirit in his children alas, they be but weak, and small; but sin is a pail of cold water, to quench the heat and comfort of them. *David* was wont to delight in God's service, to be forward thereunto; but sin did so cool him, that he would have little joy in it now: *Demas* was forward a while, but the World choaked him so, that he left Christ and Christ bids the Church of *Sardis* to be awake, and to strengthen the things that are ready to dye in them: and the *Laodiceans* grew neither hot nor cold, by reason of their pride and carnal security. So is the Church of *Ephesus* reproved, for that she had lost her first love: So the Apostle St. *James* resembleth and compareth sin to Child-bearing, for the fruitfulness of it: *Jam.* 1. 15. *Lust when it hath conceived, it bringeth*

Doct. 8. *Sin quenches grace, as water doth fire.*

Rev. 3. 2.

Rev. 2.

bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, it bringeth forth death, 1 Cor. 5. 6. Likewise it is compared to Leaven, that leaveneth the whole lump; and therefore no marvel, though it proceed by little and little, from one degree to another.

Use 1. When we see some men who have been forward, and have taken delight in good things, now grow cold, and lose their first love it is a flat sign that some sin or other hath stolen upon them; they either fall in love with the World, delights, pleasures, profits, preferments: or else security possesseth their soul, as pride, idleness, sloath, self-love, covetousness, pleasure, some sin or other hath bewitched them; and therefore let all such as find themselves thus decaying in grace, Faith, comfort, care and conscience; let them suspect themselves, and think all is not well; let them search the cause of their decay, and it is sin; some sin or other hath crept upon them.

Use 2. How should this make us afraid of sin; seeing it hath such woful effects? which is to quench the comfort and graces of God's holy Spirit in us: It blinds our eyes, that we cannot see what is good and evil; it hardeneth the heart, that a man cannot relent and morun for his sins, and be moved with the Almighties Judgments, it bringeth decay and eclipse of his graces: Men are afraid to do any thing that might hinder their health or wealth, how much more the health and happiness of their souls? Let us therefore always keep a diligent care over our souls; let us seek to cut off all occasions

to

to evil, and endeavour to ſtop the firſt beginning; for the more ſin groweth unto an head, the more the Spirit of God is quenched, the work of grace is diminiſhed, and the aſſurance of our comfort is weakn'd, and leſſen'd.

Uſe 3. When we find any decay in Faith, Love, Zeal, Knowledge, Repentance, Obedience, *&c.* Oh then let us labour to be renewed, to recover our former eſtate again. *Do thy firſt works again, awake, and ſtrengthen the things ready to dye.* For, even as a ſpark of fire in aſhes blown up; ſo muſt we uſe all means whereby we may have the work of grace renewed in us.

Rev. 1. 1. 2 *Tim.* 1. 5.

The means for encreaſing of Grace.

1. We muſt attend upon the Word of God Preached; for as that is the means to beget Faith, ſo it is to encreaſe it, and renew it.

2. We muſt read and meditate much, call our minds to account, and be ſorry for our decays, and labour to repair them; even as a Ship when it leaks, or a City when the Walls be battered.

3. We muſt (with *David*) pray often and earneſtly unto God to renew a right Spirit in us, and a godly Spirit, that may be always bent to the glory of God, and our own Salvation.

The Spirit of Adultery may dwell in us, as in *David*; the Spirit of uncleanneſs, and inceſt, may have poſſeſſion of us, as in *Lot*; the Spirit of denial of our Maſter may have place in us as in *Peter*; the Spirit of cruelty and perſecution may rage in us, as in *Paul*; but not to have ſo much rule and predominance in us, as to keep out the grace of God: For we may plainly ſee, that as ſoon

as God hath given them the right ſpirit of diſcerning, and the true ſpirit of knowledge of their ſins, they repented preſently, and became children of obedience, and worthy inſtruments of God's glory. True it is, man may fall, and ſin, through weakneſs, and frailty of his own corrupt nature, and yet recover again by God's ſpecial favour and grace: But if he recover again, and then fall to ſinning anew, it cannot be leſs than preſumption; for that man which is twice a ſinner, and but once a penitent, we may ſay his ſins are as red as ſcarlet, and yet by true repentance and amendment of his life, may be made as white as ſnow. O my beloved, when God ſhall bring us to the pit or brink of Death; O then ſhall we eaſily ſee, that ſin, and the pleaſure which we have taken in following and delighting in it; ſhall then prove a heavy burthen to us, which will ſo load our poor conſciences, that we ſhall be ready to ſink under the weight of it, if God's mercy be not ſhewn in our weakneſs. Will any man drink poyſon, becauſe he will try an Antidote? commit ſin and then preſume of Gods Mercy? God forbid! But let us ſo lead our lives here on earth, that we may in the end of our days, enjoy Heaven for our reward: There is the bleſſed Conſummation of all them who love the Lord Jeſus.

VERSE

VERSE XI.

Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

David in the former Verſe, had put up ſundry requeſts and Petitions to God for grace, and mercy for the pardon of his ſins.

The diviſion of the words.

Now this eleventh Verſe containeth in it an earneſt Deprecation, wherein the Prophet intreateth the Lord to turn from him two fearful judgments, and grievous puniſhments, which he had deſerved for his ſins. Firſt, what greater miſery can befal the child of God, than to be caſt out of God's preſence, love, and favour? Secondly, what greater plague to a diſtreſſed ſoul, than to be deprived of God's bleſſed Spirit, whereby alone we are guided and comforted, and without whom we can have no comfort, nor ever do any good thing, but ſhall be carried of our own luſts head long into all ſin and wickedneſs?

David *alludeth to the judgment of God upon* Saul.

Now againſt both theſe *David* prayeth unto the Lord in this Verſe; and herein he alludeth to the judgement of God upon *Saul*, who was his next Predeceſſor, and King over *Iſrael*, whom the Lord caſt off, and did utterly reject from being King over the people, becauſe he did reject the Lord, and caſt off the commandement of God, and would not obey his voice: And therefore the Lord took his Spirit from *Saul*, and gave him an evil Spirit to vex and torment him. And

1 *Sam.* 15. 10.

both theſe *David* here prayeth againſt; that Almighty God would ſhew him mercy, and not deal with him as he did with *Saul*; though he had tranſgreſſed and offended grievouſly, yet that he would rather humble him by ſome other means, and not in his juſt judgment to caſt him off, and reject him, nor take his holy Spirit from him. And as God doth bring coals to make his wrath hot, ſo muſt man bring tears, with repentance: *David* knew, that from God all puniſhment did come; and our perdition is from our ſelves, and by us all ſin is committed, and therefore he deſires the Lord not to caſt him away: Which is my next part to handle.

Caſt me not away.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, howſoever I have ſinned grievouſly, yet I pray thee deal not with me as thou didſt deal with *Saul*, that wicked man, to caſt me off, and reject me from being King, and Ruler of thy people, Nor take thy holy Spirit from me, whereby I am enabled to do thy will.

By the preſence and face of God is meant the love and favour of God; and therefore *David* intreateth the Lord, that he would not thruſt him clean out of favour, and deprive him of his love. Therefore let every man and woman never defer their repentance: but crave pardon for their offences, with *David* ſaying, *O Lord, I have ſinned againſt thee*; caſting thy ſelf down at his mercy Seat, like the Prodigal Son, like another

Mary

Mary Magdalene, like penitent *Peter*, desiring the Lord to have pity and mercy on thy sinful soul, not to cast it for ever from his presence; but rather chastise thee as a Son, but not to dis-inherit thee, and cast thee out for a reprobate.

Hence we learn, that it is a wonderful and fearful judgment, for a man or woman to be cast out of the Lord's favour from his presence, so as he shall shew no favour unto us, but his dis-favour, and wrathful countenance, it is a very heavy and doleful case. It is said of *Cain*, that God cast him out of his presence, and that was the height of *Cain*'s misery. So the Lord cast off *Saul* from being King over *Israel*. As the favour of God is Life; so his dis-favour is Death and Hell: And as in the presence of God is fulness of joy, and pleasure for ever more; so in the want of his presence, there is nothing but woe and misery; yea, it is a step to eternal Death, Neither is there any misery which the Child of God doth fear more than this, to be forsaken of the Lord Almighty and to be cast out of his favour.

Doct. 1. The pleasures of sin are dear bought.

Gen. 4.

Seeing that it is so great and fearful a judgment to be cast out of the Lord's favour, and gracious presence, Oh what madmen be they, that make so light of God's love and favour; that will, for the gaining of a penny or two, or the enjoying of an hours pleasure, lose the love and favour of the Lord Almighty, and for ever deprive themselves of his glorious presence, and plunge both body and Soul into everlasting woe and misery, with the Devil and his Angels. See-

Use 1. Their madness discovered that make light of God's favour.

Mat. 16. 26.

Uſe 2. Seeing the enjoying of God's preſence is ſo happy and comfortable, and to be deprived of it, is ſo grievous and terrible, how ſhould we uſe all means to get into his favour, if we want it, and keep it, if we have it? *In thy preſence is the fulneſs of joy, and in thy Light we ſhall ſee light.* And becauſe ſin thruſts men out of God's preſence, and ſeparates between God and man; above all things take heed of ſin, avoid it, and ſhun it, as the bane of our ſouls.

For the better opening and underſtanding of this Verſe, we muſt diſcuſs two great and weighty queſtions; which being well conſidered, will make much for the clearing of this Text.

Two queſtions. The former is this, when *David* intreats the Lord, *Not to caſt them out of his preſence*, that is, his love and favour; whether a man, elected, and in the favour of God, as *David*, juſtified and ſanctified, may loſe the love of God, and fall away, to become a reprobate and caſt-away, and ſo finally to periſh?

The other queſtion is, ſeeing *David* prayeth the Lord, *Not to take his holy Spirit from him*, whether the ſanctified gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit may finally and totally be extinguiſhed and taken away? Theſe queſtions be both defended and affirmed by the Papiſts and their followers, who hold that a man truly elected, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, and in the favour of God may fall away and periſh. We hold the contrary, that a man once in the favour of God, elected, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, cannot finally periſh nor be clean bereft of the

the saving graces of the Holy Spirit.

Now, because these two questions be points of great moment, and on which all our happiness and comfort doth hang, and onely depend, therefore I will stand a little to prove them by the Testimonies of Scripture, with Reasons and Arguments drawn from the written word of God, and remove some certain Objections of the Papists against the certainty of our perseverance in Faith to the end.

First, that place of *Jeremy*, where the Lord comforts his Elect, and chosen people is most pregnant for this purpose; *Yea*, (saith the Lord) *with an everlasting love have I loved thee, and therefore in mercy have I drawn thee*: So that it is manifest hence, whom God loves once in Christ, he loves for ever; and there is no time when he can be said not to love them: *For as much as he loved his own that were in the world, unto the end he loved them*: Where our Saviour Christ, to comfort his Disciples, tells them, that God the Father loved them that be Members of Jesus Christ, even unto the end, and his love shall never fail them. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Now then, unless a man will say, that God doth repent of his calling, and electing men to eternal Life, it must needs follow, that they cannot perish whom God calls, and means to save: and our Saviour Christ saith plainly, that it is impossible that any man Elected should perish. False Christs should deceive the very *Elect*, *if it were possible*, but that is impossible: And the gates of Hell, that is all the

Jer. 31. 3.

Joh. 13. 1

Rom. 11.

Mat. 24. 24.

Ro. 8. 33.

the power and malice of the Devil ſhall not prevail againſt the leaſt of God's children to hinder their everlaſting Salvation.

Again this is proved, *Mat.* 16.16. Where Chriſt promiſeth *Peter*, and in him the whole Church, *That the gates of Hell ſhould never prevail againſt him*: Where Chriſt ſhews, that indeed the Devil, through his temptations, might ſhew very much ſtrength, but they ſhould then comfort themſelves in this, that he ſhould never prevail, or finally get the Victory. Again, *Mat.* 24. *They ſhall deceive (if it were poſſible) even the very Elect.* Out of which words of our Saviour we may gather, that the Elect of God ſhall not be ſeduced, and ſo fall away finally. Again, *Joh.* 10. 28. Chriſt ſaith, *His ſheep ſhall never periſh*; adding this withal. *No man ſhall take them out of my hands.* And again, *Rom.* 8. 30. *Whom he predeſtinateth, he calleth, juſtifieth, ſanctifieth, and glorifieth*: Therefore ſhall not fall away finally: For he that falleth away finally, ſhall (aſſuredly) never be glorified.

But admit, (as the Papiſts would have it) that a man might fall away finally, then he muſt be clean cut off from Chriſt, and have no conjunction with him before he fall away finally: Then at the ſecond re-uniting he muſt be baptized, for Baptiſm is the Sacrament of Inciſion, or of graffing into Chriſt: But that is abſurd, that Baptiſm ſhould be any more than once adminiſtred; therefore a man is but once united, or once ingraffed, and cannot be re-united, and never fall. And therefore frivolous is that diſtinction of Venial and Mortal ſins, which

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the Papiſts uſe: For if any ſin of the Elect ſhould be mortal, then there muſt needs be a ſecond renewing of the Elect unto Chriſt; which is moſt abſurd to think, for the Lord worketh this but once: And *David* though at this time he lay languiſhing under the heat of the Lords wrath, for thoſe horrible ſins of his, Adultery and Murther; yet, in this Verſe, he prays not to have it taken from him, which doth argue that he had a touch of it, even at this time of greateſt extremity and miſery, though he felt it not with the ſame meaſure of comfort he had done many times before.

All men muſt put a difference betwixt that they feel, and that they have not felt.

Secondly, beſides all theſe plain Teſtimonies of Scripture, let us conſider a word or two, to prove, that in regard of God the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, the Elect cannot periſh and finally fall away.

Firſt, if a man Elected of God to eternal Life, called, juſtified, and ſanctified, may fall away, and finally periſh, then it is either becauſe God wants love or power to ſave him, but to ſay, that God is unwilling, or unable, is meer blaſphemy: Therefore all thoſe which he Elects muſt needs be ſaved, ſeeing God doth both will it, and ſhew that he is able to effect it; firſt if God be willing, and would ſave them, *Who hath reſiſted his Will?* *If God be with us, who can be againſt us?* but that he is moſt willing and able to ſave the Elect, it is manifeſt: For his Will, *God ſo loved them, that he ſent his Son to die for them.* Now this is a great tryal and proof of his love and willingneſs that he had rather ſee his only begotten Son, that

Rom. 11.
Rom. 8.
Joh. 3. 16.

was

was near and dear unto him, to be hanged on the Tree, to dye the curſed Death on the Croſs, to ſhed his precious blood, and to bear the curſe of God, and helliſh Torments, than to ſee any one of the elect periſh: *-And this is the Father's Will that hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but raiſe it up at the laſt day.*

Joh.6.30.

Secondly, for his power, that he is able to ſave all thoſe whom he will ſave, it is manifeſt: God is Omnipotent, and moſt righteous, and mighty to ſave, and the Lord doth what he will, *None can take them out of my Fathers hands, who is greater than all.* And therefore, it appears, that God is willing, and deſires that all the Elect ſhould be ſaved; and hath not only decreed it, but ſent his Son to ſave them.

Iſa. 63. John 10. 27, 28.

Secondly, thoſe for whom Chriſt dyed, and prayed that their faith might not fail, they muſt needs be ſaved, and their faith cannot fail; but he hath prayed for all true believers; *Father, keep them that thou haſt given me, that they may be one in me, as thou art one in me.* Now then, if Chriſt's prayer be of force, and can prevail, and do any thing with the father, (as he confeſſeth that the Father hath, doth, and will hear him in all things) then certainly no true believer can periſh, and finally fall away.

Luk. 25. 23. John 17.

Thirdly, no true member of Chriſt can periſh; for then Chriſt's body ſhould be imperfect; but every true believer is a living member of Chriſt's body, and therefore cannot periſh; yea, it is as poſſible that Chriſt himſelf ſhould periſh, as any true believer, that

that it is truly ingrafted into his body, by Faith and the Spirit.

Fourthly, in regard of God the Holy Ghost, who is the pledge and pawn of our Adoption and Salvation, the Seal of our Election, and doth testifie God's love in Christ for our Salvation. Now then, unless we will say that the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Wisdom, being of the very counsel of God, and the Spirit of truth that cannot lie, that he testifies an untruth, that the believer that repents and believes in Christ Jesus, shall be saved, and yet he shall not, which is Blasphemy; we must needs confess it is impossible; *He that is born of God cannot sin*, (with full consent, to death) *because the seed of the Spirit remaineth in him.* And therefore I conclude, That the Child of God, Elected, Called, Justified, and Sanctified, cannot perish, and for ever fall away; cannot become a Reprobate, and a Limb of the Devil, but shall continue to the end, and God will finish the good work of grace in him till the coming of his Son Christ Jesus.

Rom. 8. 16.

1 *Joh.* 3. 9.

This confutes that damnable Doctrine of the Papists, who hold all in uncertainty; yea, they teach, and hold, that a man truly Elected, may become a Reprobate, though to day a child of God and highly in his favour, yet to morrow by thy sins thou maist become a Limb of the Devil, out of God's favour, in his displeasure, damned for ever, though to day a Member of Christ Jesus called, justified and sanctified, yet to morrow lose all, and be damned for ever; which indeed is the break-neck of all hope and comfort;

Use 1. *Papists Doctrine against the nature of Faith.*

fort if a man know not whether he ſhall be ſaved, or not.

Uſe 2. Comfort unto God's children that grace cannot be loſt.

A marvellous comfort to God's children, if thou did'ſt ever find the true work of Grace in thy heart, true faith, repentance, and newneſs of Life, aſſure thy ſelf, it cannot be ever loſt. God will finiſh that he begins; yea, the eſtate of God's children now, it is better than the eſtate of *Adam* in Paradiſe, before his fall; for then *Adam* ſtood by his own power, therefore might, and did fall; *But we be kept by thy power of God unto eternal Life.* Secondly, the eſtate of *Adam* was mutable, by reaſon he had freedom of will, to ſtand or fall; but the eſtate of God's Elect is certain, and ſure, in regard of God's eternal decree in Chriſt his death and paſſion, and the bond of the Spirit which cannot be broken.

1 *Pet.* 1. 5.
Gal. 2. 2.

Three Objections.

But there be three Objections againſt this Doctrine. That faith can never be loſt; or, an Elect child of God become a reprobate First, that God is ſaid to be angry with his Children, and ſhew them his diſfavour: Secondly, that they by their ſins may cut themſelves off from God's favour, and ſo loſe eternal Life, and be damned: And thirdly, other teſtimonies of Scripture, which may ſeem to prove the ſame.

Iſa. 65. 5.

For the former, *Behold thou art angry, for we have ſinned againſt thee,* ſo that it ſeemeth, that a man in the favour of God to day, may fall out of it, and procure his diſ-favour, anger and diſpleaſure.

Anſ. Firſt, that God is not angry, to ſpeak properly, with his Children, but ſeemeth ſo to

to be by correcting and puniſhing them by judgments, and afflictions; ſo as a child thinks his Father is angry, becauſe he corrects him: So do Gods children; and indeed ſuch affections do not agree to God's nature, to be like an earthly mans.

Secondly, I anſwer, that this anger of God is not an effect of his diſpleaſure, or diſfavour, but rather his love: And he corrects his children, not to deſtroy them, but to convert them, that he may ſave them as a Father his Son, whom he loves dearly.

Object. 2. Where it is ſaid, that, God's children may by their ſins break off God's love, yea, thruſt themſelves out of favour, and be for ever damned; *Rom.* 8.

I *Anſwer*, It is falſe; for they be kept from damnable ſins, and God let's their ſins turn to their good, for God doth ever give them hearts to repent: The ſins of the godly, in themſelves, deſerve the everlaſting curſe of God, and eternal Death; If ſo that Jeſus Chriſt had not by his death and blood-ſhedding ſatisfied his Father's anger for them.

Object. 3. *David* prays that God would blot them out of the Book of Life; therefore it ſeems a man Elected may periſh, and be damned; for by that Book is meant God's Councel. *Pſal.* 69. 83.

I *Anſw.* That *David* doth not read that ever the wicked had their names written indeed in the Book of Life, or were Elected indeed; but only becauſe they lived in the Church, were taken for Chriſtians, and eſteemed as written in the Book of Life, and there-

therefore he prayes the Lord to blot them out; That is, to make it known, that they were written in it.

Well then certain it is, that no one Elect Child of God can periſh, or be damned, but ſhall come to Life eternal, and be ſaved, becauſe the Counſel of God ſtandeth ſure, and cannot be altered.

Inſtruct. Seeing this is ſo, that none that is the Elect child of God can periſh, what a ſweet comfort is this to all the children of God? For if ever thou didſt repent, and felteſt the love of God truly in thy ſoul, and art juſtified, and ſanctified, thou needeſt not fear, for ſurely thou ſhalt be ſaved: And this muſt be a ſure ſtay to uphold our poor ſouls in all dangers and temptations. We are as ſtrange Mariners on the Sea, there be great Storms and Tempeſts, great Rocks, and Sands. The Sea is the World, the Ship is the Church, Heaven is the Haven; the Devil raiſeth up many boyſterous Storms and Tempeſts, to ſink our poor ſouls into Deſperation: Now then by Faith we caſt Anchor upon the Foundation of Gods Election, which cannot be removed.

But in this place, by *Favour*, *Face*, and *Countenance of God*, is meant that favour and mercy of God, whereby God gave *David* the Kingdom in the ſtead of *Saul*, advancing him to be King of *Iſrael*, and God's Lieutenant on Earth that God would defend him, and keep him, to govern his people *Iſrael*.

Doct. 2. *The godly fear, when they remember God's judgments on others.*

Whereas *David* obſerved God's dealing with *Saul*, a wicked King, and how God plagued and puniſhed *Saul* for his diſobedi-

ence

ence against the Word of God, and thereby is warned to take heed of the same Judgments of God, lest they fall upon him: We learn, that it is the duty of every man and woman, to observe and mark Gods dealing with others, and his just judgments upon ungodly sinners, that thereby we may learn to fear the like Judgments on our selves; and it is a great point of wisdom to learn to be wise by other men's harms: And for this end the Lord doth plague wicked and ungodly men that his Children might learn to amend: even as we see notorious Malefactors are hanged on a Gibbet, that others seeing their shameful end might beware. The Lord having punished sundry Nations about this people, saith, *He thought they would have learned to fear God by their example.* *Zep.* 3. 19.

Well, seeing this is that God looks for at our hands, and which he aims at in punishing wicked men, namely, that we should be warned by it, and take heed of their sins: Let us be wise and observe God's judgments upon wicked men; and when we see a wicked man punished, a murderer, a contemner, a blasphemer, a whoremonger, or the like: then let us fear, if we live in the same sins, we pluck not down the same judgments upon us. And as *David* here calls to mind *Saul*, how he for his rebellion and disobedience was cast off from God; so let us call to mind the spectacle of God's judgments on wicked men, and take heed of their sins, lest we taste of their plagues and punishments. *Use* 1. *Doct.* 3. *Sin takes away the feeling of God's favour for a time.*

We learn, that for sin the Lord doth deprive his children of his favour, and as it were

were caſt them out of his preſence for a time: Thus we ſhall ſée, God hath ſpoiled men of great Riches and Honour for their ſins, and brought them to extream ſhame and miſery; Look on *Eli* and his two Sons; look on *Saul*, that wicked King: look on that perſecuting Tyrant, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Haman*, *Arbitophel*, &c.

1 *Sam.* 15. 1 *Sam.* 3. *Dan.* 4. 26. *Esther* 3.

Uſe 1. This ſhould admoniſh all men to take heed of ſin, and rebellion againſt God; for certainly the Lord will abaſe all ſuch as be proud againſt him, he will caſt them out of his preſence, make their names to rot and ſtink in the ſight of men: *Thoſe that honour me, I will honour: but thoſe that diſhonour me, I will diſhonour them*; and therefore, If you would not be diſhonoured in this world, and provoke the Lord to caſt you out of his preſence, and favour; Oh then beware how you ſin and rebel againſt God; for if thou be as dear to God as *Eli*, which was God's High-Prieſt, yet he will bring ſhame upon thy head.

1 *Sam.* 2. 2.

Uſe 2. *Folly of worldlings deſcribed.* This ſhews the madneſs of thoſe men and women, who deſiring to enjoy the honours, riches, and dignites, profits and preferments, they take a moſt prepoſterous and very wrong courſe; for how do men ſeek for preferments, honour, and promotion, lands and livings? Namely, by oppreſſion, bribery, uſury, extortion, and the like. Now, alas, we ſee, that it is a vain courſe, and the next way to ſtrip a man naked of all theſe things, and to bring him to ſhame and reproach, miſery and poverty; for ſin brings all theſe things upon them.

But if you would come to honour, and dignity, riches and preferment, then ſeek to keep the favour of God, ſerve him, worſhip him, honour him, and he will honour them that do ſo; and if thou ſeekeſt theſe things by wicked and unlawful means, certainly the Lord will caſt dung in thy face.

2ly. When *David* prays, *That God would not take his holy Spirit from him*, he means not the eſſence of the three Perſons, but his gifts and graces, the vertue of God's Spirit ſanctifying his heart, and renewing of him. So then, if we underſtand theſe words, we muſt underſtand this Objection.

Queſt. Whether that the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, wrought in the hearts of God's Children, can be totally and finally loſt, as *David*'s words ſeem to imply.

For the clear anſwer to this queſtion, we muſt know, that the gifts of the Spirit be either temporary, for this Life, or elſe ſpiritual for the Life to come: Now, of the former, there is noqueſtion, but the temporary gifts of the Spirit may be loſt utterly.

Graces of God double

Again, the ſpiritual gifts and vertues of the Spirit be of two ſorts; ſome common to the Elect and Reprobate, ſome proper and peculiar to God's Elect and choſen Children. Now, concerning the gifts of God's Spirit, which be common to the wicked as well as the godly, to hear the word, to preach the word, and to do ſuch like things, they may be loſt.

Thirdly, The gifts of God's Spirit are ſuch as are either eſſential to Faith, and without which faith cannot be, or elſe the effects

fects and fruits of Faith, which are not of the eſſence of Faith. Such gifts of the Spirit as be not of the eſſence of Faith, or abſolutely neceſſary to eternal Life, the Lord doth ſometimes take away for a time; as namely, the purity of a good Conſcience, that inward peace which doth accompany it, the ſenſe and feeling of God's love in Chriſt, and his ſpecial favour, chearfulneſs of Spirit in praying, hearing, and ſuch holy Duties; joy in the Holy Ghoſt, patience, the gift of prayer, and ſuch like; becauſe the love of God, and the ſalvation of the faithful may ſtand without theſe for a time.

But to ſpeak of the ſaving graces of God's ſanctifying Spirit, as faith in God's promiſes, hope of Eternal life, affiance in God's mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt, love of God, his Word, and Children, theſe graces can never be loſt wholly: True it is, they may be leſſened, and ſometimes ſeem to be loſt for the time; but yet certain it is, they cannot be wholly and finally loſt: they may be as the Sun under a cloud, and as fire raked up in the aſhes, or as the Trees in Winter; but they cannot be extinguiſhed, loſt and taken clean away, but juſt as the Sun ſhines clear the clouds being ſcattered, and the fire gives light and heat being ſtirred: ſo faith, hope, affiance, joy, comfort, peace of conſcience, and the feeling of God's love, are renewed, and ſhew themſelves clear again.

Uſe 1. *Comfort to the godly that cannot be loſt.*

Seeing that the knowledg and ſaving graces of God's holy and ſanctifying Spirit cannot totally and finally be loſt, this is matter of endleſs comfort to every true child of God

in the time of temptation and grievous trial; for if ever thou foundeſt and felteſt in thy heart true faith in Chriſt Jeſus, ſound repentance, hope of eternal life, love of God; howſoever theſe may be much weakned, and for a time in thy ſenſe and feeling ſeem to be loſt, yet they can never be taken away; yea, if thou doſt carefully attend the means, as namely the ſincere preaching of the Word, adminiſtration of the Sacraments, continual, humble and earneſt prayer, the Lord will receive them, and renew them again.

Uſe 2. This muſt ſerve to inſtruct and direct us how to judge of them who fall ſometimes into pangs of deſpair; uttering words of deſperation, that they are damned Perſons and Reprobates, and cry out thus of themſelves: Truly, if ever we ſaw in them the ſound work of grace, and true Repentance, delight in the word, care to lead a godly life, love to Gods children, *&c.* we are in Charity to hope the beſt of them, to think that they belong to God, and that they ſpeak th ey know not what of themſelves; for they ſpeak according to their preſent ſenſe and feeling: When as indeed in time of temptation, and trouble of mind, they be like a man that is grievous ſick; he can reliſh no meat, every thing ſeems bitter unto him, becauſe his mouth is out of temper; but when he comes to health, he judgeth otherwiſe: Even ſo theſe poor diſtreſſed ſouls in their trouble and affliction they ſpeak they know not what not as their eſtate is in Truth, but as they think it to be according to their preſent ſenſe and feeling.

Use 3. Hence we see, what to answer to that Objection: That many men who have made a fair profession of the truth, had excellent gifts, and yet have faln clean away. So *Heb. 6. Such as be enlightened, have tasted of the Heavenly gifts, were partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted of the word of God, and of the powers of the World to come*, such men notwithstanding may fall away, and that finally.

I answer, That there is nothing spoken there of the true work of Grace and Sanctification, of saving Faith, sound Repentance, hearty Obedience, and a new life, but only of such common gifts as may befal a Reprobate; and therefore St. *John* shews the cause why they fell away; Namely, they were never true and lively Members of the Church, or of Jesus Christ; never truly ingrafted into his Mystical Body, they had knowledg, and were enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, and had some glimmering of the joyes of the life to come, which the child of God enjoys; but the sound work of grace, a renewed heart, faith, repentance, obedience, and a sanctified life was ever wanting, they were but hypocrites. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.* *John 2. 26.*

And therefore it behoves us all to take heed that we content not our selves with the common gifts and mercies of the holy Ghost which a reprobate may have: For it is certain, that excellent gifts will not avail a man to

to salvation, unless there be the true work of grace, saving Faith, sound Repentance, and hearty obedience. *Mat.* 7. 21.

VERSE XII, XIII.

Restore to me the joy of thy Salvation, and stablish me with thy free Spirit.
Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, the sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Parts of the verse.

IN these words are contained an earnest Prayer of *David* unto God, for the renewing of Gods mercy, and feeling of his love again, in the 12 verse. In the 13 verse he uses a reason to move the Lord thereunto, namely, that if the Lord shall receive him into favour again, and testifie his love unto him in the pardon of his sins, then he will not be unmindful of Gods dealing with him, but become a preacher and proclaimer of Gods mercy unto others, to draw them to God, in shewing what God had done for his soul; and so, that by the example of Gods mercy to him, others should be won.

In the 12 verse he makes a twofold petition unto God; First, for the former feeling of an assurance of Gods love and mercy for pardon of his sins. Secondly, that God would uphold him with his free Spirit, so as now being delivered out of the cursed thraldome and slavery of sin, he might chearfully and freely serve the Lord, and run the way of his Commandments.

Reſtore me to the joys of thy Salvation.

No joy can comfort the ſoul, but the joy of Gods ſalvation.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord my God, I acknowledge and confeſs, that all the while I ſerved thee, and lived in thy fear, and led a holy and godly life, and kept an upright heart, that I found wounderful and exceeding joy in the aſſurance of thy love, and mercy in Chriſt, for my Salvation; but ſince I rebelled againſt thee, and wilfully broke thy Holy Commandments, I have deprived my ſoul of that heavenly comfort and conſolation, and felt terrors and grief, fears and cares, and exceeding vexation: Now, merciful God, I humbly intreat thee to reſtore me again to thy joy and comfort, to aſſure me of thy love and favour, that thou art graciouſly reconciled unto me, that I may receive my former comfort; and not only that, but becauſe I ſee how weak I am, and have no power to ſtand without thy help and grace, I humbly intreat thee to ſtay and ſtrengthen me, to eſtabliſh thy grace in me, and ſo to uphold me in thy obedience, that I may freely and heartily obey thee all my days.

Doct. 1. Fruit of ſin deſcribed. *Note.*

The child of God truly called, juſtified, and ſanctified by Gods Spirit, if he once ſin againſt God, and provoke him to anger by his wilful diſobedience, doth feel exceeding anguiſh and ſorrow of heart, great grief and trouble of mind, fears and cares, leſt the Lord ſhould reject him; ſo that there is a Hell in his poor ſoul and wounded Conſcience, till he be again reconciled to God by Faith and Repentance. So long as *David* walked with God in

in uprightneſs of heart, he had exceeding great joy and comfort in the Lord his God, was aſſured of his love for pardon of his ſins and eternal ſalvation; but when he fell into Adultery and Murther, and ſo rebelled againſt God, it is wonderful to ſee into what a gulf of miſery he plung'd himſelf, what fears and cares, what doubts and troubles did vex his Soul, and wounded his conſcience. Even ſo it is with all the godly, while they have a care to fear their God, ſerve and pleaſe him and keep an upright heart before the Lord, lead a godly and Chriſtian life, they feel and find in themſelves exceeding joy, and wonderful comfort, with aſſurance of Gods love in Chriſt for their ſalvation. But if at any time they break out to ſin, and rebel againſt God by wilful diſobedience, then they ſhall find an Hell in their conſciences, troubles, tears, and cares for the time. Who can tell what fears and cares *Peter* Luk. 23. felt: What grief and ſorrow of heart he was in, when cowardly he denyed his Lord and Maſter? It coſt him many a bitter tear. The Reaſon of this Doctrine is becauſe all peace and comfort to a poor ſoul ſprings from the ſenſe and comfortable feeling of Gods love in Chriſt Jeſus for the pardon of ſin and Eternal Salvation; and therefore when that is loſt, alas! what peace or comfort can they have? Secondly, they do by ſuch wilful ſin and diſobedience grieve the Spirit, and make the Holy Ghoſt ſad within them, and ſo do what they can to expel the Spirit of God in

them. Now where the Spirit of God is made ſad and grieved, how can there be any true Joy?

Uſe 2. Seeing there is ſuch ſweet comfort in a Godly and Chriſtian life, while we walk with God, and ſerve and pleaſe him in ſpirit and truth; and when men ſin and rebel againſt their God, they pull down upon their heads ſuch woful miſeries, troubles and cares: How ſhould this make every man exceeding careful of ſin, which brings ſuch woful miſeries and judgments unto our ſouls, ſuch torments, fears and cares.

The joy of thy Salvation.

AS if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord my God, when thou didſt aſſure me again of thy love and favour for the pardon of my ſins, and eternal ſalvation, I had exceeding joy therein: Now I do humbly entreat thee to reſtore it to me again.

Doct. 1. *Favour of God is a chriſtians cheefeſt joy.* Hence mark, what is the thing the children of God do moſt deſire, and crave at Gods hand, and wherein they do moſt rejoice; namely, the favour of God, and aſſurance of his love, in and through Chriſt Jeſus, that they know that God is graciouſly reconciled unto them, that they be in his favour, and ſhall never periſh, but ſhall everlaſtingly be ſaved. *David* was a King and wanted no temporal commodity, pleaſure, and delight whatſoever, wherein worldly men rejoyce; but he conceived no kind of joy at all in theſe things, to be out of Gods favour: And therefore prays unto God for the feeling of the true joy, and that is

is, of *his Salvation*, and that will miniſter unto him matter of true rejoicing indeed. Alas! moſt men being carnal, deſire riches, honour, pleaſure, *But, Lord, let me ſee thy loving countenance, thy favour and grace*; and that ſhall do me more good and comfort than all the things in the world. The poor Publican begs for this; *Lord be merciful to me a ſinner.* So *Paul* profeſſeth of himſelf, that he eſteemed of all things but as dung, in compariſon of Chriſt Jeſus, and the favour of God in him; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe if a man had all the World, and wanted the love and favour of God, and were in his diſpleaſure, and under the curſe of God, what good could it do him? Even as if a Subject ſhould have ten thouſand pounds, and yet the King cannot abide or endure him, but ſeeks his death. And therefore the child of God, if he were asked what is the thing he moſt deſires in all the World, would anſwer, Mercy, and the love of God in Jeſus Chriſt: He would deſpiſe Honours, Lands, Livings, Gold, Silver, Pleaſures and Delights, and prefer one dram or ſcruple of Mercy, and the leaſt drop of Chriſts blood for Salvation, before all the World.

Pſ. 4.6,7. *Luke* 8. *Phil.* 2.8. *Mat.* 23. 26. *Pſal.* 25. 1, 2.

This may ſerve to reprove thouſands in the world; carnal men and women, ſo they have the world at will, and may live at eaſe, eat, drink and be merry; they feel no want of Gods mercy, no need of Chriſts blood, they eſteem not Gods favour and love, deſire not reconciliation, but ſay, *Who will ſhew us any good?* Well didſt thou ne- *Uſe* 1.

ver feel the want of Gods kindneſs and mercy? No hungering and thirſting after Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs? It is openly manifeſt thou doſt not belong to God, thou waſt never yet truly humbled.

Let this Doctrine admoniſh us all to labour with our hearts to be affected with this, namely, to eſteem more of Gods love and favour, and aſſurance of his mercy, then all the world; let us deſire it more, let us rejoyce more in it: So as if the queſtion ſhould be asked, what is the chiefeſt thing that thou doſt moſt deſire and affect, and what thou doſt moſt delight and rejoyce in, of all the things in the World, we may be able in truth to anſwer and ſay with feeling and comfort, I deſire nothing more under Heaven then the mercy and love of God in Jeſus Chriſt, to be in his favour, to be reconciled unto his Majeſty, and with *Paul*, to eſteem all things but dung in compariſon of that. And till this be found in us in ſome meaſure, we can never find true comfort to our ſouls, and be aſſured that we have true ſaving faith in Chriſt. For this is a certain ſign and note of an humble and believing heart, to hunger and thirſt after God's mercy in Chriſt, and to eſteem more highly of the leaſt drop of Chriſt his precious blood for our ſalvation, then of the whole world, if it were offered unto us.

Uſe 2. We muſt labour to manifeſt this our earneſt deſire and great account of Gods mercy, by uſing all bleſſed means to attain unto it: We muſt repent and bewail our ſins, leave and forſake them: We muſt embrace

brace Jesus Christ by faith, and cry with tears unto God for mercy, *Knock, seek, ask,* and let us do as the men of *Tyrus* and *Sidon,* when *Herod* took a grudge against them, and intended to make war upon them, they came all with one accord, and besought *Blastus* the Kings Chamberlain to have peace. So, let us go unto Jesus Christ, the true peace-maker, desire him to speak to God the Father for us, so that there may be an everlasting peace. Mat. 7. 7. Acts 12. 10.

When *David* prayeth, that God would restore unto him *the joy of his Salvation,* and those sweet comforts he was wont to feel and find in Gods mercy, and feeling of his tender love in Christ; We learn that the estate of Gods children is not always alike full of joy, and comfort, and gladness; but sometimes full of grief and misery, and cares and troubles; For the dearest children of God, who are repleniſhed with the greatest measure of joy and comfort, in the feeling and assurance of Gods love in Christ, when as the Lord leaves them to fall into some sin against Knowledge and Conscience, they shall find not only a great decay, but an utter loss of joy and comfort for a time. Thus it was with *David,* who though he was a man after Gods own heart; enriched with great blessings, and spiritual mercies, most dearly beloved of God, sanctified in great measure; yet now having fallen into these two filthy sins, of adultery and murther, see how he is perplexed, in great distress, and trouble of mind; and how the feeling of Gods mer- *Doct.* 3. The state of Gods children is not always alike.

cy, and joy in Gods Spirit, ſeemed to be clean loſt. So it was with *Peter*, and ſo
Luk. 23. it is in every child of God. Didſt thou ever ſin againſt knowledge and conſcience ſince thou waſt converted, thou didſt find then a wonderful deadneſs of heart, trouble and vexation of mind, and feeling of Gods anger, with the loſs of comfort for a time.

Seeing ſins againſt Knowledge and Conſcience wound the Soul exceedingly, and alſo deprive us of the peace and comfort, and joy of Gods Spirit, and bring terrors, fears, and gripings with them: Let us avoid, as all ſin, ſo eſpecially ſins againſt knowledge and conſcience, and labour, in all good things, in all places, and at all times, to live and walk ſo upright with God, that thou never hurt or wound thy conſcience, though thou mighteſt get the greateſt gain, honour or pleaſure; yet if it be ſin, and that againſt thy knowledg and conſcience, abhor it, flie from it, commit it not, if thou loveſt thine own ſoul: For if ſins of ignorance ſhall not eſcape puniſhment, unleſs men repent, much more ſins againſt knowledge and conſcience, for theſe provoke the Lord exceedingly to turn away his favour from us, draw down his judgments upon us, wound our conſciences, deprive us of the feeling of Gods love and favour, bring trouble of mind, and a wounded conſcience. O then, would you enjoy this great bleſſing of peace of conſcience, which is a continual feaſt? Would you be loath to loſe the feeling of Gods love, and comfort of his holy Spirit? Avoid

void all ſins, but eſpecially preſumptuous ſins againſt knowledge and conſcience; they wound and hurt us, eſpecially depriving us of all peace and conſolation.

If the Lord ſhould at any time leave us to ſin, even preſumptuous ſins againſt knowledg and conſcience, which is a fearful thing, yet let us not deſpair with *Cain*, and ſay, *Our ſins are greater than can be forgiven*; but flie to Gods mercy, and there ſeek to renew Gods love again, intreating the Lord to reſtore unto us the joy of his ſalvation, and then we may obtain the favour of God again, and renew the feeling of his love. Let us truly repent, and bewail our grievous and hainous ſins, ſeek earneſtly for grace and pardon, and give the Lord no reſt at all till we find that he be reconciled unto us in Chriſt Jeſus.

Doct. 4. *Pardon of ſin the ſoundeſt joy.* *Phil.* 3. 7. *and* 8. *Luke* 10. 20.

Mark (I pray you) what was the ſpecial thing wherein *David*, the holy Servant of God, did rejoyce; not in gold or ſilver, nor in pleaſure and carnal delight; not in lands and livings, nor in his Kingdom; but in the ſalvation of God, in his love, in pardon of his ſins, and ſalvation of his ſoul. So as hence we learn, That there is no true joy in any other thing in the World, but only in the mercy of God, and the ſalvation of our ſouls.

And indeed, what other joy can there be: For though the Lord ſhould beſtow on us all things which he hath made, with abundance of the things of this Life; yea, though with *David* we might command a King-

Kingdom, yet unleſs, withal, we have this comfort, that we are at peace with God, and have our ſins pardoned, (alas) they would all prove unto us, as *Jobs* friends, *miſerable comforters.* But poor ſouls, many know no other comfort, but ſuch as ariſes from temporal things, as Gold, Silver, *&c.* wherein they differ not from Beaſts, which have their delight, as well as they, in thoſe things which are fitting and agreeable to their nature.

Seeing *David* places all his joy and ſpiritual rejoycing in the Salvation of God; that is, in the pardon of his ſins, in the feeling of Gods love, and in the Salvation of his ſoul, therefore it ſhews, that there is no other cauſe of ſound joy but in this alone; ſo that if we have this, we have great cauſe to rejoyce and be glad; but if this be wanting, either we had never the feeling of Gods love, nor aſſurance of Salvation, or elſe have loſt it: and therefore ſhould uſe all bleſſed means to attain unto it again; for we cannot have one dram of ſaving comfort and true joy, but only in the favour of God, and the aſſurance of his love for our Salvation.

Uſe 2. This ſhews, that all the joy of wicked men, in all their ſports and paſtimes, is no true and ſolid joy, but a carnal joy, a ſwiniſh joy: For how can the heart of that man or woman rejoyce, which knows not whether God loves them, or hates them, whether they ſhall be ſaved or damned, what joy can they have? It is madneſs rather than joy and mirth. *David* ſaith, that the wicked men

men joy in their *Corn*, *Oyl*, *Wine*, outward, worldly, and temporal things; but he desires the loving countenance of the Lords favour and grace, which shall make him joy more than all they in their pomp and vanities. And then it will cause him to lye down in rest, peace and safety; whereas the joy of wicked men is gone in a moment, utterly lost, and past recovery for ever.

And stablish me with thy free Spirit.

THis second part of the verse contains a prayer to the Lord for a new mercy, namely, the blessed grace of corroboration, to be strengthned in grace and obedience, and kept from sin by the grace and spirit of God in time to come, As if he should have said, O Lord my God, I do not only pray for the pardon of my sins past, which are many and great, but I do humbly intreat thy divine Majesty to give me power, and to strengthen me against the like evils in time to come: For I know my weakness, and the wickedness of my heart to be prone to all sin by nature: And if thou shouldst pardon my sins past, and not prevent and keep me from sin in time to come, I should easily marr all and run headlong into all sin. And therefore I beseech thy Majesty, stablish and strengthen me with grace from thy holy Spirit, that I may serve and please thee all my days with a willing and ready heart.

Second part of the verse.

Note.

Stablish me.

THe word signifies properly to underprop and shore up something that is weak, declining and ready to fall.

Hence

Doct. 5. *Man weak being left to himself.* *Ex.* 15.34. *Ps.* 78.6. *Ex.* 9.27. *Jud.* 3.17. *Mat.* 22. 45. *Heb.* 6.

Hence learn, that even the best of Gods children, that have the greatest graces, and be strengthned in faith, yet if they be left unto themselves, alas, they be as weak as water, they be not able to stand against the least assault and temptation of the Devil. This *David* felt and found in himself, and confessed his weakness, and desires the Lord to establish and uphold him, to shore him up by the grace of his holy Spirit. *Peter* who seemed to be a valiant Champion, and defied his enemies, and vowed he would rather die then deny his Lord and Master Christ Jesus, yet, being left to himself, how foully did he fall, and cowardly deny him three times in one hour, at the voice of a little girl? So all the falls and infirmities of Gods children, though never so wise as *Solomon*, strong as *Sampson*, righteous as *Lot*, holy as *David*, doth prove this to be true: And *Paul*, tho' he was a blessed Vessel of mercy, greatly enlightned and sanctified, cryes out, *O wretched man that I am*; and fears the great corruptions of his heart. The child of God may be compared to a staff in a mans hand; so long as thou dost stay it, and hold it, it will stand upright, but pull away your hand, down it will fall of it self: Even so do we stand, while the Lord doth stay us, and uphold us; but if he takes away his hand, and leave us, down we go. We be like a little infant that is in the Nurses hand, so long as she holds it, it will go, and move, and stand; but if she pull away her hand, it falls, and takes a knock. As God is the Author of all grace, and first Fountain of all mercy; He alone

Ro. 7.24.

alone can turn the heart, work Faith, Repentance and Obedience: So it is God alone that must give the second grace; namely, corroboration, continuance in grace, or grace to continue in faith and obedience.

This confutes the Doctrine of the Papists, who hold, That a man having grace from God to believe and repent, can merit at Gods hands grace to continue, that God should, *ex condigno*, give him grace to continue; and that a man being once just, can make himself more perfect; but, *David* doth here confess that all is of God. *Use* 1.

This serves to reprove them who trust too much on their own power and goodness, rely upon their own Wisdom, Knowledge and Strength: When once they get a little knowledge and taste of the word, Oh they think themselves sure and well, they fear no danger, they defie the Devil; so long as they say their prayers, and serve God well, they hope God will keep them, and so are secure and careless; but of all men these be in greatest danger, that least fear danger: Look on *Peter*, he was never more weak than when he thought himself most strong: *I said I shall never be moved; but thou turnedest away thy face, and I was sore troubled. Pride goes before a fall.* *Use* 2. *Isa.* 30. 6. 1 *Cor.* 10.

How should this make every man to fear himself, to suspect his own weakness! *Blessed is the man that fears always, but he that hardneth his heart shall fall into destruction*, or evil; where *Solomon* sheweth, that a man that doth fear himself and his own weakness, is happy; but he that is secure, and trusts in himself, shall certainly fall into evil: The secure sinner

sinner, that fears no danger, is the greatest sinner. And therefore not knowing our own weakness, how unable we are to stand of our selves, or to do any good at all, except the Lord endue us with his holy Spirit; it must be a means to make us rely upon the Lord, and pray unto him, that he would uphold us in integrity, faith, obedience, and in true repentance; for if *David*, *Peter*, &c. did fall, whither then shall we fall, if the Lord do but a little leave us to our selves?

VERSE XIII.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

David to his petition joyns promises.

David in this Verse, doth profess unto the Lord, that if he shall deal thus graciously with him, to pardon and remit his great and grievous sins, and to receive him again into his love and favour, that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for so great a mercy; but he will become a preacher and proclaimer of Gods mercy to others, and labour to turn many to God by true repentance.

Parts of the verse.

In this verse we have two parts: first the promise which *David* maketh unto the Lord and the duty he vows unto him, namely, *I will teach thy ways unto the wicked.* Secondly, the issue and blessed effect, namely, this that by his example many poor sinners shall repent, and come to God for mercy.

Then

Then shall I teach.

THat is, after I shall find and feel thy mercy bestowed upon me, I will like a vessel of mercy, draw it out to the good of others. *I will*, that is, I that have fallen and sinned so grievously, and transgressed thy Commandments, will teach and publish how merciful, good and gracious thou hast been to me, and to my soul, and will speak out of the sense and feeling of mine own conscience. *Sense.*

Thy ways.

BY the ways of God here is meant that course and manner of dealing which the Lord taketh with sinners, when they do truly repent: namely, that he is most ready and willing to embrace them, and shew mercy unto them, when they shall acknowledge and confess their sins, bewail them, beg the pardon of them, and seek to him for mercy.

Seeing *David* doth here profess, that if God shall deal thus graciously with him, that then he will be a proclaimer of the same mercy to others; we learn, That it is the duty of every one to shew unto others what God hath done for his soul: when God is good and gracious unto us, we must still be ready to acknowledge the same unto others, thereby to draw them on likewise to a manifestation of the truth, and to seek for the same favour and grace at Gods hands. *Mat.* 5. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* Thus the Spirit of God, in the Scriptures, remembreth the righteousness of *Noah*, the faith and obedience of *Abraham*, The goodness of God towards our selves must be made.

him, the patience of *Job*, the chastity of *Joseph*, the meekness of *Moses*. And Christ himself doth testifie of the graces of God that shined in *John Baptist*, that *he was a burning and shining light*, *Joh.* 5. Thus the Apostle *Peter* testifieth, 1 *Pet.* 2. *Have your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as of evil doers, may by your good works, which they shall see, glorifie God in the day of visitation*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. 2 *Cor.* 8. 1, 2. *Rom.* 4. 11, 13.

Use 1. We learn hence ever to be ready to make known unto others what God hath done for our selves; if so they may further Religion, or provoke others to godliness, or bring glory to God. God is not ashamed of us, to be called our God, and to do us good: let us then never be ashamed to acknowledge his love unto us, for it were a foolish modesty in us to conceal those things which should be uttered. There was a time indeed when Christ would not have himself or his works known, but that was when that knowledg might hinder him and his preaching. But *Mat.* 10. 27. he commanded his Apostles to speak that in the light, which he had told them in darkness; and to preach that on the house-tops, which he had told them in the ear, for now would Christ have himself published abroad. And thus we see how to behave our selves in respect of Gods gifts, we must not be ashamed to confess them, but declare them.

Doct. 2. *Thankfulness required.* Seeing *David* here professes unto the Lord that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for his mercy shewed unto him, but will to the uttermost of his power, praise God for it,

it, and ſhew his thankfulneſs in drawing others to God. Hence we learn, that it is the duty of all the children of God, that they ſhould labour with their own ſouls to be thankful unto God for every bleſſing he beſtows upon them, to be mindful of it, to praiſe God for it, and to ſhew it in doing good to others: It is all the Lord looks for at our hands, to acknowledg his love and kindneſs, to be thankful for it; and when we ſhall be truly thankful for a benefit received, it is an excellent means to move the Lord to beſtow a new bleſſing upon us; as we ſee, if a poor man receive a ſmall favour at our hand, and ſhall be thankful for it; we will ſay he is worthy to have a good turn, it is well beſtowed, I ſee he is thankful for it. So when the Lord beſtoweth a benefit upon a man, and ſees he is thankful for it, and ſpeaks of it to the honour of God, the Lord is moved thereby to beſtow another, but he that is unthankful for the old, is not worthy to receive new.

Phil. 4.4. *Ex.* 18.10

Plal. 126. *Gen.* 14. 19. *Pſ.* 32.22. *Pſ.* 32.1.

Haſt thou received any ſpecial favour, bleſſing or benefit of Gods, know it is thy duty to be thankful for it, to acknowledg it, to ſpeak of it, and to praiſe God for it. *Rejoyce ye righteous in the Lord, for it becomes upright men to be thankful.* It is a comely and a moſt fit thing; and *David* calls upon his Soul oft-times to perform this duty; *Praiſe thou the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me praiſe his holy name: praiſe thou the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Pſ. 33.1.

Pſ. 103.1.

And above all other mercies, let us bleſs God for his love in Chriſt for the pardon of our

our ſins, as *David* doth here, and *Pſal.* 103. *forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy ſins, and forgave thee all thine iniquities.* And therefore let us remember this duty, and think moſt ſeriouſly of Gods bleſſings and benefits beſtowed upon us. The greatneſs of them, and number, and continuance of them: and labour in ſome meaſure to be thankful unto God, and eſpecially for the pardon of our ſins in Chriſt Jeſus. And withal, let us ſhew it in doing what good we can unto others.

Uſe 1. Let us ſhun that foul ſin of unthankfulneſs to forget Gods bleſſings, and paſs over his mercies. Let us not be like the nine Lepers who not one of them returned to praiſe God, only the poor *Samaritan*, finding himſelf, cleanſed, came to bleſs God for it: So let us take heed that we be not found in that number who forget Gods favour. The Lord hath been good unto us, waſhed and cleanſed our ſoul in Chriſts blood; let us return unto God, let us confeſs it to his glory, and with *David* call on our ſouls not to forget the benefits of the Lord.

It is a note of an unthankful heart, to obtain a benefit, and not to acknowledge it. Praiſe is comely, and well becometh the Saints of God; the want whereof taketh away the comfort and ſweet fruit of Gods bleſſings from us. It is a great offence to be unthankful unto men, but far greater unto God, by whom we live, move, and have our being: And therefore let us learn, that whenſoever we have obtained any favour or bleſſing at Gods hands, be it concerning this life, or

or the life to come; let us thankfully return the calves of our lips unto him, and let us never shew our selves more ready to ask, than we are willing to praise the Lord when he hath granted the request of our lips.

Doct. 3. Fruit of faith to seek the good of others. Ps. 66. 6.

It is a special fruit of faith and unfeigned repentance, to convey grace unto others, to shew what God hath done for our souls, and to draw out the blessings which God hath bestowed upon us, to the good and benefit of others. The Prophet *David* calleth all men unto him, and makes his speech, *Come* (saith he) *I will shew you what God hath done for my soul.* And the Elect are called vessels of mercy, because they being themselves filled with the mercy of God, they should draw out the same good liquor for the comfort of others. St. *Paul* saith, *God have mercy on him, that he might shew mercy unto others.* The child of God is not like unto churlish *Nabal*, to say, *Every man for himself*, and keep all for themselves; but they be pitiful and bountiful, yea, and (to their power) helpful unto others.

Ps. 119. Gal. 3. 2 Cor. 1. Isa. 38. 1. Lu. 22. 2.

Use 1.

This may serve to comfort those who have been careful for the performance of this duty, that have been careful to make others partakers of the same comfort they have reaped themselves. It is a blessed thing indeed, when men have endeavoured to their power to benefit others, to exhort them, to admonish them, to comfort them; and in all things to have sought their good. Oh what a wonderful consolation and comfort shall this be unto us, when we leave this world and go the way of all flesh, to remember we have

have ſought the good of others! *Dan.* 12.3. *They that turn many to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the ſtars in the firmament.* Luke 12. 43. *Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Maſter coming ſhall find ſo doing.* We ſhall find more comfort of heart and joy of Conſcience, when we depart this life, that we have been faithful in that little committed to our truſt, and made others to partake of it, then if we had great abundance of earthly bleſſings.

Uſe 2. This may ſerve to reprove that common conceit in mens minds, that ſo long as they do well themſelves, they need not care how others do, whether they ſink or ſwim; and therefore they keep all to themſelves, never look to benefit others: Like a covetous and fooliſh *Nabal*, part not with a bit to *David*; ſo theſe keep all for themſelves, by no means ſeek to draw out the graces of God for the good of others. But it is impoſſible for any Chriſtian man or woman, who have taſted truly of the mercy of God, for his comfort, and the work of grace, but he muſt communicate the ſame to the good of others; and indeed they are never ſo profitable as then. *Iſ.* 38.19. As we ſee Spices, though never ſo ſweet and ſavory, are not commendable until they be rubbed and chafed. And therefore let us remember to practiſe this duty, to help others, and inſtruct them, and communicate our knowledge, comfort, experience and judgment, even to the good of others.

Doct. 4. When *David* ſaith, he will teach, not his own ways but Gods; namely, how the Lord deal-

dealeth with penitent ſinners, we learn what it is that the Miniſters of the Word ought eſpecially to teach poor ſinners, namely, *The ways of God*; that is, how God deals with poor ſinners: namely, that he is moſt willing to embrace them, and pardon their crimes, if they will unfeignedly repent. Chriſt was exceeding plentiful in this kind of teaching; howſoever he did ſometimes declare and pronounce judgment to impenitent ſinners, yet it was his uſual courſe to preach Gods infinite mercy to all ſuch as would repent, to invite them, to perſwade and allure them to turn to God.

What Doctrine Miniſters ought to teach.

Mat. 12. 18.

Ro. 12. 1. 2 *Cor.* 5. 18.

Well then, this may direct all ſuch as the Lord hath called to preach his word, to take this courſe, that howſoever they may and muſt pronounce Gods judgments againſt impenitent offenders, yet they muſt preach Gods infinite mercy in Chriſt to all that will repent; and ſhew how ready the Lord is to ſhew mercy to all them that confeſs and acknowledg their faults, and be weary of them, and deſire pardon. For ſure it is, that if there be any ſpark of grace in mens hearts, when they ſhall hear of Gods abundant mercy in Chriſt, that the Lord ſtandeth at the door and knocks, that the Lord like the father of the prodigal child, will meet us in the mid-way; it muſt needs, if there be not a heart of Steel, make our bowels yearn, and for ſhame to ſeek unto the Lord.

Uſe 2.

Rev. 3. *Luke* 15.

And it was *Pauls* manner to intreat men that they would be reconciled unto God, to beſeech them in his name with love and kindneſs, with tears and prayers, to pray them,

them, to entreat them, to beſeech his hearers: and we ſhall find that churliſh, rough, and harſh dealing, great words, and thundering ſpeeches be not always the beſt to win mens ſouls: but when we ſhall with a mild and loving ſpirit intreat men, and beſeech them to repent and turn to God, it muſt needs affect them.

It muſt ſtir their hearts up to a moſt careful and attentive hearing and liſtning to the word of God. For a man cannot perceive and know the ways of God by nature; no, by nature we conceive of God as a terrible Judge and angry God, and flie from him as *Adam* did, and therefore we had need to have the word of God preached and taught unto us, and be inſtructed in the ways of God, how the Lord our good God hath ſhewed mercy unto great ſinners, and will to us if we can repent, and ſeek unto him. For the Lord muſt draw us by his mercy, elſe we cannot come at him.

To the wicked: And ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.

Doct. 5. The ignorant are to be taught the ways of God.

THat is, impenitent ſinners, ſuch as live in ſin without repentance. Hence mark, who had need to be taught in the ways of God, namely, poor ſinners, that live and lie in ſin, even the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*, and ſuch as ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, ſuch as never heard of God, or faith, or repentance, *&c.* Such poor ſouls had need to be taught the ways of God.

Uſe 1. This may admoniſh all thoſe that be ſet over Gods people, Magiſtrates, and ſuch as have power in their hand, to provide that ſuch

ſuch poor ignorant people as want the means may be taught the ways of God. *How ſhall they call on him on whom they have not believed? how ſhall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?* And *where prophecying fails, the people periſh.* And it is ſaid of our Saviour Chriſt, that when he ſaw the people as poor ſheep having no ſhepherd, he had compaſſion on them, and his bowels yearned towards them. Oh that the bowels of all ſuch that have charge to look unto it, might yearn for the poor ſouls of this land, to provide for them the bread of life.

Rom. 10. 14. *Prov.* 29. 18. *Mar.* 14.

The chief cauſe why men live in ſin, be ſo vile, wicked and unclean, is, becauſe they be not taught the word and ways of God; it could not be, if they were taught and inſtructed, that they ſhould be ſo vile and wicked, ſo ignorant, prophane, irreligious and ſuperſtitious. But where Viſions fail, the people muſt needs periſh.

And therefore thoſe that ſeek to take away teaching and preaching of the word of God, of what ſpirit are they? *David*, he thinks it the only way to bring men to God, to convert poor ſinners: and therefore to take it away, to root out the Miniſtery of the word and means of our ſalvation, what is it elſe but to caſt away the ſouls of the people? to famiſh them, to pine them, and to ſtarve them? And therefore let us pray unto God, through Chriſt Jeſus, that the Lord of the Harveſt would ſend forth painful Labourers into his Harveſt.

Mat. 9.

2 Part of the verſe.

The ſecond part of the verſe ſhews the fruit of this duty that *David* will perform, namely, that hereby, by this Doctrine, and his example, many a poor ſinner ſhall be converted unto God.

Doct. 9. Converſion of a ſinner is Gods work.

In that *David* here promiſeth to himſelf this uſe and fruit, that he ſhall be, by his preaching and example, a means to bring others to God; Hence we may learn a gracious comfort for all godly Miniſters of the word, who labour both by life and doctrine to win others, that if they ſhall be painful in teaching, and careful to live a godly life, they ſhall certainly find the bleſſing of God upon their labours, to the converting of ſinners, and ſaving of Souls. *If I had ſent theſe Prophets, and if they had ſtood in my counſel, and declared my ways unto my people, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil ways, and from the wickedneſs of their own inventions.* *Jer. 13. 22.*

Where the Lord ſhews that all ſuch as be the true Prophets of God, ſtand in his ſtead and teach his ways, they ſhall ſee the bleſſing of God upon their labours. And the cauſe why men convert not ſouls, is becauſe they were never ſent of God, and do not teach Gods ways, and ſtand not in his ſtead; or elſe becauſe though they teach the Truth, yet their lives be vile and wicked, they pluck down with one hand what they build with the other, and deſtroy that in life which they teach in Doctrine.

Uſe 1.

Hence mark the reaſon why ſo many great and learned men, of excellent gifts, wit, and learning, do not convert many ſouls unto God

God; becacſe they either teach not Gods ways, but their own ways, their wit, eloquence, and devices or elſe though they teach well, yet they live ill, and ſo cauſe their doctrine to be leſs regarded, and weaken the power of it by their ſinful life; and it pleaſes God, in his great mercy, to uſe the labour of his poor ſervants, who dare not utter nor ſpeak their own words, nor ſeek themſelves, but Gods word, in plain evidence and ſimplicity, and live according to their teaching, the Lord doth bleſs their labours, for the converſion of ſinners, and ſaving of poor ſouls.

Uſe 2. It might admoniſh all thoſe who either teach their own ways by painted eloquence, toys or tales; or elſe, though they teach the truth, that they joyn with it a godly life, elſe they may be long enough ere they do any good; and if they would convert ſinners, let them firſt be converted. *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.* And let no ſuch careleſs Miniſters wonder that God gives no bleſſing to their labours, ſeeing they fail either in teaching Gods word truly and plainly, or elſe in life they live wicked and ungodly. One *Achan* is enough to infect a whole family; one *Jonas*, a fugitive ſervant of God, is able to endanger a Ship, and the whole company in it: ſo one ſin is able to deſtroy the ſoul of man; Oh then, what will a world of ſins do, which we daily and hourly commit againſt our Creator. *Luk.* 22. 23.

VERSE XIV.

Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing joyfully of thy righteouſneſs.

David cannot ſatisfie himſelf in ſeeking mercy for his ſins.

IN this verſe, yet once again *David* returns to intreat for mercy and favour at the hands of God, that he would pardon his great and grievous ſins, yea, his bloody ſins, and that God would in mercy deliver him from that puniſhment which was due unto him for the ſame; for he intreats the Lord to deliver him from blood, that is, his hainous and capital ſin of murther, and ſhedding that innocent blood of *Uriah*, his faithful ſervant, and many others with him; ſo alſo the puniſhment due for it.

1 *Sam.* 11.

Parts of the verſe.

This verſe contains two parts: Firſt, a requeſt, with great earneſtneſs to God for deliverance, from his grievous crime, *Deliver me from blood.* Secondly, Reaſons to move the Lord thereunto, namely, taken from the honour and glory of God, which he will ſhew forth: *And my tongue ſhall ſing joyfully of thy righteouſneſs.*

In the Petition, firſt mark what is the requeſt, namely, that God would deliver him from blood, that is, the moſt cruel and bloody ſin of ſhedding the innocent blood of many of his ſubjects.

Secondly, the manner of his requeſts, *O God, thou art the God of my ſalvation*; that he prays to God now with faith, aſſuring himſelf, that upon his repentance God was

now

now reconciled unto him; and though he had sinned grievously, yet not clean fallen from grace, but so as still he could call God his God, and the God of his salvation.

Deliver me from Blood.

THat is, from the punishment which is due unto me for shedding the innocent blood of *Uriah*, and the rest which were slain with him.

Doct. 1. *The hainousness of the sin of murther.*

We must observe that which hath been taught before, namely, that *David* prayed often and earnestly unto God for the pardon of his sins, he could not at one or two petitions obtain it, but is fain to pray again and again for pardon. Hence we learn, That murther and shedding of innocent blood is a most horrible sin; and he that is guilty of blood, it will wound his conscience, it will make him to quake and tremble at Gods vengeance which pursues him, unless he repent: as in *Cain*, after he had slain his brother, and the Lord had brought him to a sight of his cruel murther, he cries out, that his sin is greater than can be forgiven; and that every one that meets him would kill him: such is the conscience guilty of murther, it can find no rest, no ease, neither in company or alone, in any thing, but still torments the mind, till God gives grace truly to repent. *Gen.* 4.

Neither may or must we think that this guilt and terror of our mind or Conscience cometh through the guiltiness of the Law, shame of the world, or fear of punishment; for let a murtherer have security given him from all the Laws, and freedom from all punishment, yet a murtherer would never be at

quiet, his conſcience would ever trouble and torment him, yea, and follow him up and down in all places, and open his own mouth to bewray himſelf. Thus are Gods judgments upon them that they ſhould fear all things, who will not fear him that made all things. If a man had all the pleaſures that heart could deſire, yet that can yeild him no true comfort and contentment, when the conſcience is guilty of ſo great and horrible ſins; and albeit, for a time, the conſcience of carnal men, that never truely repented of their ſins, ſeemeth to be at reſt; yet it is a wild and ſavage beaſt, which lying aſleep ſeemeth tame and gentle, but being raiſed and rouſed up, flyeth in a mans face.

Gen. 41. 1.

Uſe 1. Seeing murther and ſhedding of innocent blood is ſo horrible a ſin, ſo odious and execrable, ſo fearful and damnable, how ſhould it make all men ſhun it, and be afraid of it never to imbrue their hands in the blood of any man, for blood will have blood. *Whoſo-ſheddeth mans blood, by man his blood ſhall be ſhed, for in the image of God made he man.*

Gen. 9. 6.

And this was one ſpecial thing which moved *David* to intreat the Lord, not only to pardon his bloody ſin of killing *Uriah*, but alſo that he would not puniſh him, and bring his vengeance upon him, and his children after him, for ſhedding of his blood. Well then, abhor this fearful ſin of murther, for blood will have blood, and will cry for vengeance to Heaven. And here we are to be ſorry, and to bewail our ſinful times, that ſhedding of blood is not puniſhed more ſeverely. Wilful murther is winked at, and mocked

mocked at, and made but a money matter. *Yea,* (ſaith the Lord) *becauſe of oaths the Land ſhall mourn*; ſo for murther it ſhall mourn. Well, let us beware of this foul ſin of murther, and ſhun all occaſions that tend to it, as hatred, drunkeneſs, deſire of revenge, quarrellings, fightings, *&c.* Theſe ſins of *David* did multiply his ſorrows, for he watered his couch with tears: a world of ſins muſt needs have a Sea of tears to waſh them away, as *David* did, for upon his true repentance Gods favour was afterwards proportionable to his ſorrows. *Jer.* 15. 10. *Hoſ.* 4.

And if it be ſo hainous and horrible a ſin to ſhed the blood of the body, and to kill the body; if murthering of the body (I ſay) be ſo hainous, what ſhall become of Soul-murtherers, that ſhed the blood of poor ſouls? It is ten thouſand times more grievous, as the ſoul is far more worth than the body; and if he ſhall periſh, and is worthy to dye that murthers the body, how much more is he worthy to die that ſheds the blood not of one, but of many a poor Soul; And ſuch be all thoſe that either teach not the Word of God at all, or teach it negligently; they be ſoul-murderers, and ſhall give a juſt account for it one day *Ezek.* 3.

We ſee that no man, though never ſo great, can go free from Gods judgments for a murther. *David* was a great King, a man that was above all mens Laws, yet the conſcience of his ſin accuſed him, and he could have no reſt, till he had got the pardon of it. So as we ſee the great force of mans conſcience, though he could eſcape all the judgments of men *Uſe* 3. *Iſa.* 66. 24. *Mat.* 9. 2 5 *Pſ.* 49. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

men, yet the conſcience will accuſe, till God do clear him: and this we may ſee in many men, who being guilty of this ſin, although they have by money or friends got pardon and freedom from the Law of man, yet if God touch them for it, they can never have peace till they have bewailed this ſin, and got the pardon from God; but ſome of them even pine and languiſh away, and never look up all their days; ſuch is the conſcience of murther, and ſhedding innocent blood, that he may fly a thouſand miles, he may be a great man, a King, that no man dare call him to account, yet he carries that in his boſom which will dog him and purſue him: neither ſhall he find reſt till he have repented, and be reconciled to God by the blood of Chriſt.

Doct 2. *God hath mercy for ſuch as ſeek mercy.*

Here is matter of comfort and conſolation for all ſuch as have been great and grievous ſinners, notorious wicked livers, that if they can repent, be humbled, bewail their ſins beg pardon, the Lord will ſhew them mercy. *David* here found favour for the pardon of his bloody ſins, adultery and murther, upon his true repentance: ſo *Peter* for his grievous and hainous ſins; and *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom were caſt ſeven Devils, was ſaved; *Lot*, though he committed inceſt with his own Daughters, yet found favour at Gods hands. So we ſee great ſinners, if they unfeignedly repent, ſhall find great mercy

Luk. 8.2.

This is warranted from the Lords own mouth, *Iſa.* 1. 18. *Though your ſins were as crimſon, they ſhall be made as white as ſnow; though they were as red as ſcarlet, they ſhall be*

as

as wool, And again, *Isa.* 44. 22. *I have put away thy transgressions like a cloud, and thy sins like a mist*, *Isa.* 33. 23. and *Isa.* 43. 25. *Jer.* 31. 31.

Let every one of us listen to this Doctrine, Hast thou been a notorious wicked liver, a miserable sinner, a common drunkard, a filthy liver, a most vile and notorious blasphemer, a thief or robber? hast thou hated and persecuted Gods Ministers, and his dear children, and contemned the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, lo, if thou canst truly repent, confess thy grievous sin, bewail it, cry to God for mercy and pardon of it, the Lord will shew thee mercy; for no sin, though never so great, can sever thee, and cut thee off from mercy, if thou hast grace to repent, and beg the pardon of it. And therefore though thy sins have been many and great, adultery, murther, *&c.* take heed thou despairest not with *Cain*, to say, *my sin is greater than can be forgiven*; but repent with *David*, and God will pardon it. *Use* 1. *Isa.* 1.16, 18.

Let no man presume hereupon to sin, because *God* will pardon great sins: For, as it is true that *God* will pardon great sins, when men repent truly of them, so without repentance there is no pardon of the least sin: and if thou shalt wittingly and willingly run into great sins, it is a great doubt that thou shalt never, or hardly get out of them: he that sins because *God* is merciful, doth abuse his mercy, and then his mercy shall be turned into Judgment. Gods mercy should lead us to repentance, and not make us bold to sin. *Use* 2. *Rom.* 2.4.

Doct. 4. *The punishment of sin should terrifie us from sinning.* 2 Sam. 10.

Seeing *David* prays and intreats the Lord not only to deliver him from sin, but also from the punishment due to his sin, the curse of God which was due to his grievous sins of adultery and murther; as the Prophet told him, because he had done this evil, *the sword shall never depart from his house, and his own sons should defile his wives*; We learn, in regard of Gods fearful judgments, plagues and punishments, that attend and wait upon sin, men ought to be afraid to commit sin against God; for sure it is, that the curse follows sin; and as sin grows, so grows the curse. For the Lord is a just God, and must needs punish the transgressors of his Law. And although as yet he takes not his loving kindness from them, neither suffers his truth to fail, yet he will visit their transgressions with the Rod, and their sins with scourges, as we may see here by the example of *David*, of the people of *Israel*, *Judg.* 4. 1, 2. of *Miriam*, *Numb.* 12. of *Solomon*, *Asa*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Josiah*, *Hezekiah*, *&c.* If then we break, and do not observe his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments, when he searcheth with lights, and findeth out our sins, we must with *Achan*, give the glory to God, and make confession unto him; we must pronounce righteousness to belong unto him, and unto our selves open shame and confusion of faces for ever.

Use 1.

Well then, let us remember this if we sin, certainly the Lord will plague us, and punish us either in our body, our soul, goods or good name, Wife or Children, the Lord will find us out, we cannot escape his judgments,

ments, we cannot hide or cloak our ſins from him; if men could be perſwaded of this, O they would be afraid to lie and continue in ſin, if they thought God were a juſt God to torment them, and plague them for their ſins, how dareſt thou ſin, if thou couldeſt be perſwaded of this, that God will certainly plague thee? Indeed the mercy of God ſhould make us loath to ſin, but if that will not, yet let his juſtice terrifie and fright all ſecure and careleſs ſinners.

Uſe 2. *Rev. 20. 14.*

Let no man ſooth himſelf to think he ſhall eſcape, If any man hear the curſes of Gods Law againſt ſin, and ſhall bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, although I walk after the ſtubbornneſs of my heart; then the Lord will not be merciful unto that man, but the wrath of the Lord, and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt him, and he ſhall bring upon him every curſe written in his Law to root him clean out: *I will viſit thoſe that be frozen in their dregs, and ſay in their hearts, God will neither do good nor evil.* And if neither the mercy of God will move us, nor his judgments make us afraid to commit ſin, our caſe is fearful and dangerous.

Note.

Uſe 3.

Laſtly, Seeing God chaſteneth his own children when they offend, then it muſt needs follow, that the wicked, which are none of his, ſhall not eſcape his revenging hand: if the Lord be ſevere againſt ſinners, that he will not ſpare, no, not the ſins that fall to his own dear children, being of his own houſhold, and Citizens of his own Kingdom, and the members of his own body, if the Lord do deal ſo ſharply with theſe, O how

how heavy will he lay his judgments upon the wicked? 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. *The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; If it first begin with us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and sinner appear?* But God correcteth the godly in mercy, the wicked in wrath; the one as a loving Father, the other as a just Judge. O that all wicked and ungodly men would lay this to heart, and know that assured judgment is reserved for them at the great day of the Lords general Assize, when they shall, will they, nill they, plead guilty at Gods Bar, where the Register book of all their actions shall be brought forth, and they shall receive according to their works.

Doct. 4. *True note of a Penitent to aggravate his sins.*

In that *David* speaks in the plural number, *Deliver me from blood*, that my most hainous, horrible, and cruel sin; he doth not mince it, or lessen it, but sets it out in colours, a bloody sin, a monstrous sin. Therefore in true repentance and confession of our sins, we must labour to express them to the full, and make room enough to beat our consciences, to make our hearts smart, and feel the weight and circumstances by aggravating them, to set them out, to make them appear as vile and filthy as we can; for thereby we shew our grief for, and hatred of them: As the Church of God did, in the ninth of *Daniel*, who confessed her sins, not lightly, but with wonderful and great aggravation, in heaping up one thing on another; and as St. *Austin* did, who for a small offence, as we account of it in our time and days, for robbing

bing of an Orchard or Garden of ſome Pears or Apples, or ſuch like fruit, as in his ſecond Book of his Confeſſions, the fourth Chapter, doth appear, how he doth aggravate his ſin in weighing all the circumſtances.

Firſt, he ſaith, This theft which I committed, was not only in the Law of the Lord forbidden, but by man too, and I had it in my intention and thoughts daily, and did remember that it was a ſin, and yet did it.

Secondly, I wilfully reſolved to do it, what ere ſhould come of it; and yet I did it.

Thirdly, I did it not for want, but in diſdain of piety, and likewiſe out of an envious mind to injure others.

Fourthly, I had in my own ground great ſtore of the ſame fruit, nay, better too.

Fifthly, I did ſteal, not ſo much to delight in the act, as my own theft; that I might ſay with my old companions, that I and they had robb'd ſuch an Orchard, at ſuch a time.

Sixthly, That there were in my company a number of deſperate youths, and incarnate devils, to egg me on.

Seventhly, he ſaith, That before they went, or thought of this action they had been a drinking, ſporting and dancing.

Eighthly, We, in a covetous manner, after we had eaten our bellies full, did carry all away.

Ninthly, We carried ſo many away, that they were a heavy burthen to us.

Tenthly, When we came to our abode, we gave them to the Hogs, and abuſed the crea-

creatures of God by wantonneſs and exceſs. And then he concludes, and cries out, *O my Creator, O my God, behold my heart; I beſeech thee to ſhew pity and compaſſion upon me; anoint my wounds with the oyl of mercy, reſtore me my ſight, cloath my nakedneſs, enrich me that am poor, ſtrengthen me that am weak, help me that am faln.* And thus did *David*, which is the party meant in my Text, cry out and ſay, *Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, the God of my ſalvation.*

This condemneth moſt men, who when they are told of their ſins, do ſeek to cloak and excuſe them, to make them little ſins of great ſins, if they could well: it is a ſign of a naughty heart, as we ſee in *Saul*, who would not confeſs his ſin, but excuſe it: it ſhews men are not humbled nor grieved, have no hatred of it: but if we did truly ſee the loathſomneſs of ſin, O we would aggravate it, yea, ſpeak as bad as we can of it, and not excuſe it in any caſe. The ſecond thing in the Petition, is the manner of it, namely, that he doth pray in faith and affiance in Gods mercy; for he prays unto God, and deſcribes him to be the God of his ſalvation, becauſe he puts all his affiance in Gods mercy for ſalvation, and acknowledgeth it to be the gift of God.

2 *Sam.* 15.

Doct. 5. *Faith required in Prayer.*

In that *David* thus prayeth for the pardon of his ſins with faith and affiance, we learn, That if we deſire to obtain our requeſts, we muſt pray to God with faith and affiance in Gods mercy; for at the ſame time that God toucheth a poor ſinner to mourn for his ſins, and to repent, he gives him faith to pray to him

him with affiance for pardon and ſalvation. So then we ſee, whatſoever we ask at Gods hands, we muſt ask it in faith: *If any lack wiſdom, let him ask in Faith, and waver not; for he that wavers can have no hope to obtain any thing at Gods hands.* *Jam.* 1. *Heb.* 11. 1.

Whoſoever doubteth whether God will grant his requeſts or not, can never pray for any thing earneſtly and effectually. This our Saviour teacheth, *Mark* 11. 24. *Whatſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye ſhall have it, and it ſhall be done unto you.* And none can have this aſſurance, that God is ready to hear them, and to grant their requeſts, but only the faithful, who have firſt this aſſurance, that their ſins are pardoned, and that they are reconciled to God in Chriſt Jeſus.

How ſhould this move us all to labour to get ſaving faith, that ſo we may pray in faith, and obtain our requeſts pardon of ſins, wiſdom, the gifts of Gods Spirit, *&c.* For he that comes in unbelief can look for no mercy at Gods hands: And therefore the prayer of many unbelievers, ignorant ſouls, (alas) they be but bablings, and can do no good. O then, let us labour to be able to ſay, My God, give me this or that. *Uſe* 1.

This muſt teach us to moderate our deſires, and take heed we ask not any thing that is not warranted by the Word; for unleſs it be warranted by the Word, we cannot have any aſſurance he will hear us, for there is no faith without the Word. And therefore when we ſhall ask things for our own luſts and pleaſure it is juſt with Almighty God not to hear us. *Doct.* 6. *Praiſe of our Salvation properly belongs to God.*

When

When *David* calls the Lord, *My God, and the God of my Salvation*, he acknowledgeth that ſalvation, pardon of ſins, life, and all good things come from God, and are his gracious gifts in Chriſt.

It is he who at the firſt gave us life, when we were ſtark dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. It is he again that keeps our ſouls in life; if we fall he raiſeth us up; when we wander he recalleth us from judgments paſt, preſent, and to come: he hath, doth, and will deliver us, ſo that he may well be called *The God of our Salvation.*

Uſe 1. Let us then acknowledge this, that all the good things we enjoy, the favour of God, pardon of our ſins, juſtification, ſanctification, redemption, *&c.* all theſe are the free mercies and gifts of God in Chriſt, and then *Rom.* 3.2. we ſhall learn to depend on God for the comforts of this life: for we know that God hath given us Chriſt, and delivered us from ſin, death, hell; how then can he deny us the leſſer things for this life?

Uſe 2. Seeing ſalvation is the gift of God, we ſee that the Doctrine of the Papiſts is erroneous, who teach men that they may merit ſalvation and mercy at Gods hands, pardon of ſin, *Rom.* 6. ſalvation, and life eternal. *David* acknow- *Dan.* 9. ledgeth it to be the free gift of God; and *Job* 42.6. therefore let us abhor their Doctrine, and *Eph.* 2. our own goodneſs or worthineſs, and acknowledge that all we may enjoy for ſalvation, it is the free and undeſerved favour of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

David he felt now the heavy weight of Gods anger, which preſſed him down exceedingly,

ceedingly, and break his heart; yet, withal, he had ſome feeling of the mercy of God, which made him bold to go to God for pardon, ſo that he could call him, my God. Wherein we may note the difference of Gods children from Infidels, that have no faith; the child of God although he be touched to the quick with the feeling of Gods diſpleaſure, yet he can by faith go to his Father, and make his moan unto him; but a wicked man, that hath no faith in Chriſt, he conceiveth nothing but Gods anger and judgment, and therefore flies from him, and cannot give one rap at Gods Mercy-ſeat, cannot for his life ſay, and confeſs, *My God my Father*, but is glad to run from God, as *Adam* did, and ſo in time to deſpair, as *Cain* and *Judas* did; for there is no doubt, if they had repented, but they had been forgiven. Note.

It is obſerved of *Abraham*, that when he prayed to the Lord for the City of *Sodom*, that *Abraham* gave over asking before God gave over granting. Therefore, I ſay, let not the multitude of our ſins and offences be a means to deter and hinder our repentance; for if it do, it will be our deſtruction in the end: but let our tongues ſing of thy righteouſneſs

And my tongue ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs.

THeſe words contain in them the reaſon of his requeſts; as if he ſhould ſay, If thou ſhalt, O Lord, pardon my offences, and in mercy deliver me from the curſe and puniſhment due to me for them, my tongue ſhall be a preacher and publiſher of thy mercy unto others: *And my tongue ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs.* By righteouſneſs is not meant here

here the juſtice of God, whereby he takes vengeance for ſin; but by righteouſneſs is meant the merciful dealing of God in keeping promiſe with all repentant ſinners, in pardoning and remitting their offences and receiving them to mercy.

Doct. 7: *Gods mercies muſt unty our tongues to praiſe him.* *Luk.* 22. 13. 1 *Chr.* 19. *Act.* 11. 18. *Theſ.* 2.

It is impoſſible for any man or woman, who having truly taſted of Gods mercy in Chriſt for life and ſalvation, to keep it in as that it ſhall not break forth and appear; but he that hath his heart affected with Gods mercy in Chriſt, it will unty his tongue to relate of it, and to praiſe God for it. As it is not poſſible to keep fire ſo cloſe, but it will ſmoak and flame in time; ſo the feeling of Gods love cannot but flame out and appear to the comfort of others.

Well, by the rule of this Doctrine, we may ſee that few have their hearts affected with the mercy of God in Chriſt, becauſe they ſeldom or never take occaſion to ſpeak of it, and to praiſe God for it. The poor Leper finding himſelf to be cleanſed, came to praiſe God for it; and *Naaman* would give *Eliſha* a reward, but our hearts have no comfort in them, therefore we open not our mouths to praiſe God. *Luk.* 17.

And my tongue.

OBſerve how *David* ſpeaks, that as in heart he will laud God, ſo in words he will praiſe him. Of all the parts of a mans body, the tongue only ſerveth and ought to honour God, and to praiſe him. That ſerveth to unfold the truth of God, to bleſs him, to praiſe him, and to inſtruct others. *Jam.* 3.

Well

Well, ſeeing that God hath of all members of the body ordained the tongue to be that member whereby we ſhall honour and praiſe him, let us govern our tongue ſo, as it may ſerve to open his will, to praiſe and laud him, to ſpeak of his wondrous works: let us uſe it well in prayer, in ſpeaking of Gods mercy and judgment to inſtruct others: and in any caſe let us ſet a watch before our mouths, that we ſin not in ſpeeches: *If any man ſin not in his tongue, the ſame is a perfect man.* *Jam.* 3.

Of thy righteouſneſs.

Doct. 8. *Gods righteouſneſs what it is.*

David calls Gods faithfulneſs and truth in keeping promiſe to repentant ſinners, *His Righteouſneſs*; wherein note a wonderful comfort to all repentant ſinners, that God avoucheth he ſhall be unjuſt, and unrighteous, if he ſhould not give them mercy and pardon when they repent, ſeeing he hath tied himſelf by his promiſe; ſo as if he ſhould not ſhew them mercy, he ſhould be unjuſt, and deny himſelf, and be no God. Note.

Well then, let this provoke every man to repent, and turn to God! For if thou doſt bewail thy ſins, and beg pardon, thou maiſt challenge it at Gods hand, urge him with his promiſe; and he can no more deny thee mercy than he can deny himſelf, for he will pardon repentant ſinners. And this methinks ſhould move all ſinners to repent, ſeeing the Lord is true of his word, and cannot deny thee mercy, unleſs he ſhould deny himſelf, and ſo be unjuſt; which is impoſſible, for he is true of his word.

VERSE

VERSE XV.

Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.

David having ſundry times prayed, and preferred many requeſts unto God for grace and mercy for pardon of his ſins; in the 13 and 14 verſes he uſeth a reaſon drawn from his thankfulneſs, which he will ſhew unto God, in labouring to ſet forth his glory, in being a faithful and zealous preacher of Gods mercy unto others, to draw them unto God.

But here in this verſe, *David* finding and feeling his mouth, as it were, faſt ſtopped, and his lips tied up, by reaſon of his ſins. and the feeling of Gods anger, intreateth him to open his lips again. and to give him matter of praiſe and thankſgiving.

Open thou my lips.

AS if he ſhould ſay, O Lord, I confeſs that my ſins, and my great grief I have conceived for them by the ſenſe and feeling of thy diſpleaſure hath ſtopped my mouth, ſo as I am not able to preach thy mercy, and to praiſe thee as I deſire: now then I beſeech thee, Lord, to take from me that ſorrow and extremity of grief, by pardoning my ſins, and receiving me into favour, that I may have mercy miniſtred unto me, to praiſe thy name for the pardon of my ſins. Deliver me, O moſt gracious Father, from thy wrath and eternal damnation.

So long as the conſcience doth accuſe for ſin,

sin, and men are not assured of Gods love in Christ, poor souls they cannot so much as once open their mouth, and move their tongues and lips to praise God with any sound comfort. For how can a condemned man do this, that can find nothing but hell in his conscience, and trouble of mind? No, thy sin, and grief for sin, and fear of Gods wrath, will stop thy mouth. Let any man make trial of his own heart, and he shall find this true by his own experience, that the guiltines of sin, and accusation of conscience for fear of Gods anger, will stop a mans mouth so as he shall not be able to open his mouth with comfort to praise the Almighty.

Doct. 1. *Sin takes away the use of the Tongue that man cannot praise God as he should.*

Yea, although a man be elected, called, and sanctified, the dear Child of God, a sound Christian, yet when he shall fall into sin, adultery, murther, *&c.* when the poor conscience is now upon the rack, he shall feel a Hell for the present, he shall find his mouth stopped, so as where he could before praise God thankfully and comfortably, and call on his Name, yea, he would be a means to stir up others: yet after the committing of sin, and accusing of conscience, he shall find his lips tied up and his mouth stopped, for the present time no power nor will to praise Almighty God; no, but this will sound often and loud in thy ears, *What hast thou to do to declare my Ordinance, and to take my name into thy mouth?* So that a poor sinner in distress, and feeling the conscience to accuse for some sin, and fearing Gods displeasure, shall fear even to name and mention the name of the Almighty. Seeing

Psal. 50. 16.

Vſe 2. Seeing this is the woful and bitter fruit of ſin, againſt knowledge and conſcience, even to ſtop our mouths, and to tye up our tongues, ſo as we ſhall not be able once to open our lips to praiſe God with comfort; how ſhould this make us exceeding afraid of ſin, to commit it, to be afraid of offending God, and wounding our Conſciences, ſo as we ſhall not dare to mention the name of God. We ſee they which be near to the King, or great perſons, if they know any thing that offends them, ſo as they ſhall not endure in their preſence, they will be careful to ſhun and avoid it. Well, ſin is of that nature, that it will make us afraid once to mention the Name of God, but with reverence and aſhamed to come before him, and quake to call upon him.

Vſe 2. If thou canſt now call upon God with comfort, and praiſe him cheerfully with peace of conſcience; O make much of it, and take heed of ſin and diſobedience, for that will be a means to ſtop the mouth of thy conſcience, and cauſe thee that thou ſhalt not be able to open thy mouth to praiſe the Lord.

Vſe 3. We ſee here, that all the praiſes that ungodly men offer unto God, they be but as deſperate ſongs of a condemned man; as if one arraigned and condemned for Treaſon, ſhould ſing, and make himſelf merry when he is at deaths door, it is but mad mirth. *Is any man merry let him, ſing Pſalms; is any ſad let him pray.* So then, ſeeing wicked men lve in ſin, and in danger of Gods vengeance, hell and damnation, it were better for them to weep, and to wring their hands, and

Jam. 4.

houl

houl and weep with rich men. So if ungodly men knew all, and saw Gods vengeance hanging over them, hell-fire gaping for them, and the Devil leading them blind-fold to the place of perdition, they would change all their mirth into lamentation and mourning; for so long as thou livest in sin, without assurance of Gods mercy in Christ, alas, thou hast no power to open thy lips, or to move thy tongue to praise the Lord. *Jam.* 4.5.

If *David*, could not of himself open his lips to praise God, but the Lord must unlock them by the key of the Spirit, and put his finger unto his mouth, and say *Ephata*; hence we learn, That it is not in the power of man to keep the Law of God, to merit heaven and salvation, by his own goodness and deserts. For if a man have not in his power, so much as to open his lips, how much less to perform the Law, and so to merit heaven and salvation? No, a man cannot of himself think a good thought, but the Lord must cause both the will and the deed. Doct. 2. *No ability in man to perform any good.*

It serves to pull down the pride of mens hearts; for by nature we are given to think well of our selves, to admire our own goodness and worthiness, and our own gifts, as if we could perform great matters; and yet (alas) we are not able to open our lips, but by Gods help; but if God have given thee any gift or power to do, or speak well, be not proud of it; *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* Oh then, why art thou proud of it? Well, let us acknowledge whence we received all, and give God the glory. *Use* 1.

This condemns the erroneous doctrine of the *Use* 2.

the Papists, who so much justifie mans free-will and goodness, that he being but helped by grace a little, is able to keep the Law, yea, to merit salvation and life eternal. But if they cannot by their own power so much as move their Lips, or open their mouth, how can they with all their goodness keep the Law, and so merit salvation?

Use 3. Seeing the motion of the lips, and so of the whole body, is of God and no man can speak a word but by the power of God, nor say, *Christ is the Lord*, but by the power of the holy Ghost; yea, *in him we live, move, and have our being*: O then, how should we be most carefull to speak, and do, so as God may have glory; for unless the Lord give thee power, thou canst not move thy finger, nor thy tongue, or once open thy lips, if the Lord deny thee his favour, and with-hold his power; as in that wicked *Jeroboam*, when he would have slain the Prophet of God for crying out against his sins, the Lord smote his hand that it withered, and he could not pull it in again. Well, let us all take heed how we use and abuse our tongues, lest the Lord in justice do make them cleave to the roof of our mouths for the same.

2 Part of the verse. The second part of the verse contains a soleman protestation of *David*, that if the Lord shall thus shew him mercy, in pardoning his sin, and receiving him into favour again, that then he will be most willing and ready to praise God, and to publish his mercy and goodness, whereby the Lord shall reap much glory.

Hereby we see, what it is that God requires

quires at our hands for all the mercies he beſtows upon us, namely, praiſe and thanksgiving, that we ſhould ſpeak of Gods mercies, ſeek to honour him, and to be thankful for his bleſſings. This *David* ſhews more plainly. *What ſhall I give unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* Where he ſhews, that all that God looks for at our hands is praiſe and thankſgiving. So the Lord himſelf having rehearſed his great bleſſings unto his people, ſaith thus, *O Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear him, to love him, and to walk in his ways?* wherein he ſhews wherein ſtands our true thankfulneſs. Namely, not only in word to acknowledge his mercy, but in life to fear him, love him, call upon him, truſt in him, and keep his commandments.

Doct. 3. *Thankſgiving a neceſſary duty.* Pſ. 116.

Deut. 10. 12.

Seeing this is all the Lord requires for his great and continual bleſſings and mercies, for our ſouls and bodies, namely, thankfulneſs, acknowledging his love and mercy, and praiſing him for the ſame; let us labour with our own hearts to give the Lord praiſe, to acknowledge his mercy and goodneſs beſtowed upon us, *It is a comely thing to be thankful.*

Uſe 1.

Pſ. 103.

And that we may the better be ſtirred up to perform this worthy duty of praiſing God, let us conſider both the greatneſs and continuance of Gods bleſſings beſtowed upon us, as *David* did, *Forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy ſins, &c.* So let us bethink our ſelves of Gods love and mercy to us: Firſt, in Electing us to be the Sons of God, in delivering us from hell and damnati-

Pſ. 33. 1.

on, in redeeming us by the death and blood ſhedding of his own Son, in preſerving us from ſo many dangers, in feeding us, and cloathing us, and all the reſt of his bleſſings for this life, and that which is to come. O if we could thus bethink our ſelves of the number, greatneſs and continuance of Gods mercies, how could we be ſo unkind to forget, or to be unthankful for his bleſſing? We ſee if a friend do us a pleaſure, though it be but a meals meat, we will be thankful for it, relate of it: but if he ſhall be a means to ſave our life, as from Sword, Fire, Water, and the like? O then we will go on our hands and knees to do him good. Well, God is our beſt friend, and we are moſt beholden unto him, yea, more than to all the World; and therefore let us labour with our own hearts to be thankful: and becauſe many can purpoſe to give God thanks in words and with their lips, let us know it is not enough in words to praiſe God, and ſay, *Thanks be to God*; but we muſt labour in life to ſhew our thankfulneſs, when as we labour to honour God, when as we ſeek to do his will and to ſerve him, and are loth to offend ſo merciful and bountiful a God. For if a man ſhall make ſhew in words that he is grateful, and yet live in ſin, there is no thankful heart in him. And that we may the better be ſtirred up to do this, let us know there is no better way to move the Lord to continue his love and mercy unto us, then when we do freely acknowledge his mercy, and are thankful for it; as we ſee, if we give a ſmall thing to a poor body, if they be thankful, to ſpeak of it,

it, and to confeſs it, it will provoke us to do them great favours, and ſay, alas, he is thankful, it is well beſtowed on him, he is worthy of a better turn: So as to be thankful for one good turn is to crave another. And therefore let us remember this duty, it is comly, it is all the Lord requires of us, and is the way to procure a new mercy at Gods hand.

Uſe 2. Let us then take heed of that foul fault of unthankfulneſs, when as men can be content to devour Gods mercies from day to day, and never render him any thanks; like the Swine under the Tree, that eats the Acorns, and never looks whence they come: ſo many wicked men devour the mercies of God, and never open their mouths; like unto the nine *Luke* 17. Lepers, whereof not one returned back to praiſe God.

Cauſes of unthankfulneſs. *Pſ.* 103. 2. The cauſes of unthankfulneſs: Firſt, men conſider not the greatneſs, number, and continuance of Gods mercies, and therefore they imagine themſelves more beholden to a natural man for a meals meat, than to God for all his mercies.

Secondly, forgetfulneſs of his mercies, when men let them paſs away, and never be affected with them.

Thirdly, The hardneſs of mans heart, which is not touched nor affected with the great bleſſings of God.

Well, let us beware of this ſin, which is ſo odious, that the Heathen men would rather be accuſed of any ſin, then this ſin of ungratefulneſs.

Secondly, by ungratefulneſs we deprive our ſelves of many other mercies; for a

gratefulnes for an old is the beginning of a new; so ungratefulnes for an old favour is the next way, to deprive us of a new.

VERSE XVI.

For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee, &c.

THE Prophet *David* having professed that it was his earnest desire to honour God, to praise him, and seek his glory; confesseth that he hath no other means but to speak of his mercy, and to be willing to set forth the same: To become a preacher of his righteousnes and goodnes. And he confesseth (to his comfort) that the Lord is more delighted with this, then with all those external ceremonies and sacrifices which the people of the *Jews* did offer, and thought by them to please God, and to asswage his anger and procure pardon of their sins thereby.

So that the main scope of these two verses is this, to shew, *David*, though he had nothing in the world to require the Lords mercy unto him, yet he perswaded himself upon his true repentance, the Lord would accept of his earnest desire to honour him, and so set forth his praise.

In the 16 verse he shews what are those sacrifices which the Lord cares not for, and desireth not outward sacrifices alone, which men offer without faith and repentance, and whereby they think to appease his anger, and merit pardon of their sins by the same.

In

In the 17 verſe he ſhews what are the beſt ſacrifices we can offer unto God, which he will accept of for Chriſts ſake, and where with he is well pleaſed: *A broken and contrite heart*, truly wounded and humbled for ſin, and which doth by faith embrace Jeſus Chriſt who alone is the propitiatory Sacrifice to appeaſe his Fathers anger, and to work our attonement and reconciliation with God.

Thou deſireſt not ſacrifice.

THE Sacrifices of the *Jews* were of two ſorts, ſome propitiatory, to procure favour at Gods hands for the pardon of ſin; ſome gratulatory, which were only for thankſgiving for bleſſings received. Now of theſe *David* ſpeaks here eſpecially. *Sacrifices of the Jews of two ſorts.*

And of Sacrifices for thankſgiving were two ſorts; ſome were called Sacrifices, as the firſt word ſignifies, where ſome Beaſt was ſlain and offered in Sacrifice to God.

Again, ſome were called Burnt-offerings, which were all conſumed and turned into aſhes; and they were called ſo, becauſe the ſmoak of them aſcended up to heaven: and both of them were figures of Chriſt Jeſus, who ſhould be ſlain or burned, as it were, in the fire of Gods anger for our ſins.

Queſt. But how can the Lord be ſaid not to deſire burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, ſeeing he commanded them in his Law?

Anſw. We muſt not think the Prophet ſpeaks here ſimply, that the Lord cares not for Sacrifices: for as yet the Ceremonies of the Law were in force and the greateſt part of Gods Worſhip ſtood in Sacrifices; and *David* himſelf, and *Solomon*, were diligent,

and not sparing in performing this duty.

But we must know, *David* speaks here, first, that the Lord careth not for Sacrifices as they were done of the common people of the *Jews*, because that whereas the Lord did ordain them as helps to lead them to Christ, that they might deny themselves, and see they were worthy to dye when the Beast was slain; so they might seek to be saved by the everlasting Sacrifice of Christ alone. But they began to imagine that by their very offering of beasts in Sacrifice, God was pleased, never looking to Christ Jesus, whereof they were but types and figures.

Secondly, because the people of the *Jews* did offer them without faith and repentance, with impenitent hearts; and thought so long as they offered sacrifice, though they lived in sin, it skilled not.

Thirdly, the Lord delights not, nor is so well pleased with this outward sacrifice, as with a broken and contrite heart, when this is humbled and mourns for sin, believes in Christ Jesus, and is careful to honour God by his holy life.

Doct. 6. *A mans person must first be approved before his sacrifice be accepted.* Jer. 24. 20 Ps 29. 13. Mat. 15.

Seeing *David* affirmeth, that God cares not for outward sacrifice when the inward is wanting, we learn, that though a man should perform all the outward Service and worship of God, and that in never so glorious a manner, yet if the heart be not affected and purified, all is in vain, the Lord cares not for it; as to preach the Word, to hear it, to receive the Sacrament, &c. If there be not a broken heart for sin, a repentant heart, a sanctified heart, all is but vain. The Scribes

and

and Pharisees seemed marvellous precise in outward shew, very zealous and forward; yet their hearts were puffed up with pride, self-love, malice, covetousnes, &c. And therefore Christ saith, *unless your Righteousnes exceed the Righteousnes of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Judas in outward shew preached and prayed as well as others; yet a very devil, a most traiterous wretch, full of hypocrisie, covetousnes, and bloody cruelty: Well, we see, though men make never so good and fair a shew, yet if the heart be not sound, all is in vain, and from the teeth outward, and God cares not for it; he esteems as much of their sacrifices, as if they should kill a man, or sacrifice a Dog, which is abomination to the Lord.

Mat. 5. 10.

Is. 66. 3.

This may serve to cut the combs of all those which be proud hypocrites, and all they do is in outward appearance: alas, their praying, preaching, hearing, it is but swines blood, dogs blood, a beautiful abominarion: and therefore let us never content our selves with the outward Worship and Service of God, but let us labour to do all in truth, with faith, obedience, repentance, humiliation, and good conscience.

Use 1.

Pro 26. 9. *Ps.* 50. 16.

This condemns all the blind devotions of ignorant and prophane sinners, who think that so long as they offer their outward Sacrifice, come to Church, hear the Word, receive the Sacrament, &c. they may live in sin, and yet please God. And this was the very cause why the Lord abhorred the *Jews* Sacrifices. And may not the Lord even now

Use 2.

Esa. 1. 11, 12, 13. *Jer.* 7. 7, 8.

abhor our Sacrifices, our coming to Church, hearing, praying, &c. Seeing men do content themselves with outward actions, and come with sinful hearts and affections.

Doct. 2. *A man may perform a good duty, and yet sin in the manner of doing it.*

We learn hence, that a man may perform duties which God hath commanded, and yet not please God, but sin most grievously in doing of them. To offer Sacrifice, it is Gods own commandment, but when people shall do it in an evil manner either without faith and repentance, or else to an evil end, to merit at Gods hands; then it maketh that which God commands to be a sin to them, not in it self, but to them that fail in the manner of doing it. To offer Sacrifice was the commandment of God, but when the *Jews* thought by their Sacrifices to appease Gods anger, without the Sacrifice of Christ they sinned, and God abhorred them, and cared not for them. Again, to preach the word of God is his commandment, but when *Judas* shall preach the Word, to hide his covetousness and treacherous heart, it is a sin in *Judas*. To give our alms, it is a thing commanded, and a sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased; but if men shall give to merit, and to be seen of men, the Lord careth not for it. So as we see a man may do things which God commands men to do, and yet be so far from pleasing God, that they shall sin and provoke him to anger, because they do them not in an holy order, in faith, repentance, obedience, and Zeal of the Lords glory.

Prov. 15. 11.

Use. 1.

This condemns almost the whole service of God amongst the Papists, who do all to this

this end to merit and deserve at Gods hands pardon for sin, and freedom from punishment; but this is to a wrong end: we must do good deeds, not to merit, but to honour God, to give good example, and to make our calling sure to our selves.

This must admonish us all, not only to do what God commands, as to preach the word, hear, pray, receive the Sacraments, *&c.* but to do it as God commands, or else he abhors all we do; unless we do them in faith, repentance, and obedience, all is in vain. *Use 2.*

If the Lord abhors those sacrifices which he commands, for mans offence, how much more those sinful sacrifices which have been invented by man, without any warrant from his Word, as the Idol of the Mass, Popish Pilgrimage, perpetual Chastity, Voluntary poverty, living in a Cloister, *&c.* *Doct. 3. Popish sacrifices abominable.*

Well then, let us take heed, not only that we do not abuse those Sacrifices which the Lord commands, by our evil doing and performing of them; but much more that we be no: so bold, at any time, to offer unto the Lord such Sacrifices as are condemned in the word of God, to offer with strange fire, as *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and such as *Paul* calls *Will-Worship*, and Christ calls *The invention of man*, for these the Lord abhors. *Use 1.*

It condemns that bloody and beastly sacrifice of the Papists, who offer in the Mass Christ daily for the quick and dead, an horrible abuse of Christ Jesus: For Christ hath by his own sufficient sacrifice of his body and blood upon the Cross, appeased his Fathers anger for the sins of the World and put an *Use 2.*

end to all those sacrifices; and if they offer up Christ in the Mass for quick and dead, then Christs sacrifice was imperfect, that must be patched up with that abominable Idol.

Concerning those sacrifices which were lambs, sheep, goats or bullocks, and were all slain and offered to God in fire, let us mark, that they were all so many figures, types and shapes of that everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he offered upon the Cross in his own person.

Doct. 4. *Christ an end of all other sacrifices.*

Then this doth commend unto us that blessed and most meritorious Sacrifice of Christ the Lamb of God, seeing there were so many prophesies of it, even from the beginning of the World, and so many shadows and types of it, as cannot be numbered, because they never passed one day amongst the *Jews*, from the time of the Law till Christs coming, but they offered at least Morning and evening Sacrifice, as shadows of Christ Jesus to come; and the people of God, the believing *Jews*, and holy Fathers and Prophets, did in them behold Jesus Christ, as slain and crucified before their eyes. And as Christ saith, *The holy Patriarchs and Prophets and famous Kings, desired to see my day, and would be glad to see it, and yet saw it not.*

Use 1. Well, seeing the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is so excellent and meritorious, of endless worth to procure Gods favour to us, how often should we think upon it, never let it depart out of our minds? And to this end we should be more willing to approach and come to the Supper of the Lord, that so there

there, as it were in a plain Table and Picture and not painted on a wooden Croſs, as the Papiſts do; we might behold Chriſt crucified, and his blood ſhed for our ſins, ſo often as we ſee the Bread broken, the Wine poured out: *So often as ye do it, do it in remembrance of me, to ſhew forth my death till I come.*

For, the remembrance of Chriſts Sacrifice it is a ſweet comfort to all wounded and diſtreſſed ſouls; it is Sack and Sugar to all them that truly believe in him; it is an excellent means to kill ſin, and to humble our hard hearts, that we ſhould remember our ſins were as the bloody nails and ſpear which put him to death; and a powerful bridle to reſtrain us from ſin, becauſe, ſo often as we ſin, we do, as it were, pierce his heart afreſh: and as for thoſe that care not for coming to the Sacrament, nor yet for the Word, wherein Chriſt is lively crucified, they ſhew they have no benefit by this Sacrifice of Chriſt.

VERSE XVII.

The ſacrifices of God are a contrite ſpirit. A contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.

DAvid having ſhewed what be thoſe Sacrifices wherein the Lord hath no pleaſure, namely, ſuch as men ſhall offer with hope to merit, or without faith or repentance.

Now

Now he shews what is the sacrifice wherein the Lord takes great delight, and is well pleased, and that is, in one word, *a broken spirit, a heart truly wonded for sin.*

In the same verse let us first find out what is the broken and contrite Spirit. Secondly, the commendations of it, namely it is called the *Sacrifice* of God. Thirdly, that *he doth not despise,*

By a broken and contrite spirit is meant such an heart as is truly humbled with the sight of sin, wounded and pierced with the fear of Gods anger, grieved for offending so mirciful a God, and loving a Father, and doth beg for mercy at his hands as for life and death: besides the endless mercy of God in Christ our Saviour, which breaketh the heart of a poor sinner.

So then, there be two things that wound and bruise the heart of sinners; first, the sight of sin, and knowledge of our misery by reason thereof. Secondly, the endless mercy of God in Christ, so as it cuts us at the heart to remember that we have offended so good and merciful a Father.

Doct. 1. *Broken heart a-most rare thing to be found.*

Seeing this is that broken heart which is thus bruised with the sight of sin, and is humbled for them; yea, hath a most low conceit of it self as most vile and unworthy: we shall see that it is a most rare thing to be founded; for generally men are so blinded with self love, that they see nothing, or feel nothing to humble them, or bruise their stony hearts, but are like the Church of *Ephesus.* Rev. 3. 14 For this is ever a fellow of hardness of heart, and cause of all ignorance of our misery Eph. 4. 18.

ſery. Men are like thoſe that be ſick of a Lethargy, which is a deadly diſeaſe, and incurable. This hardneſs of heart it is the common judgment of God upon our people, it reigns every where. How often hath God knockt at the doors of our eyes by his judgments? at the door of our ears by his juſtice? at the doors of our heart by his word and commandments? and we will not turn to him by our repentance; which if we do not, he then will turn us into hell for our forgetfulneſs. Nor muſt we have qualms or fits, or when we are offered time of piety and repentance, like a weather-cock turn to ſin again and be never at a certain leſt we ſhould be condemned for ever to hell for our inconſtancy; therefore let us beſeech thee, Lord, that the time to come may be at ime for our repentance for our ſins paſt.

Seeing that this contrite heart is ſo rare and hard to be found, and the hard heart is ſo common, and ſo dangerous a fore-runner of Hell, O let us look to our ſelves, how we find our hearts broken and bruiſed with the ſenſe of our ſins, mourn for them, and bewail them. Alas, it is wonderful to ſee poor ſouls, how men lie in ſin, ſee nothing and fear nothing, nor complain of nothing: Men can complain of the ſtone in the reins, and cry out with grief, but no man complains of the Stone in the heart, they feel no ſuch grief, though it be deadly and dangerous: And if thou findeſt thy heart hardned, ſo as thou art not touched and troubled with the ſight of ſin, of Gods vengeance, of hell and damnation, that thou canſt not mourn for them,

them that thou feareſt not God's judgments, and are not affected with his mercies, to mourn for thy ſins: O know thy eſtate is fearful and miſerable, thou art in extream danger to periſh, and be damned for ever.

Seeing a hard heart is ſo fearful a judgment of God, and fore-runner of Hell; let us uſe all good means for the bruiſing of the heart; and to this end we muſt labour to know the Law of God, how we break it daily in thought, word and deed: we muſt know the curſe of God due to ſin, that *the wages of ſin is death.* And becauſe the preaching of the Word is the moſt excellent means to work this, and is the Lords hammer to cruſh in pieces our ſtony hearts, let us attend that. And laſtly, let us make much of Gods mercy in Chriſt, that ſo his mercy, patience, long-ſuffering, *&c.* may be a ſpecial means to bruiſe our hearts; that we have ſinned againſt him.

Ro. 2, 1. 2.
Pſ. 40. 12.

Uſe 3. Let us take heed of pride of heart, to think too well of our ſelves; for this is certain, where men and women think too well of themſelves, there is hardneſs of heart, and where hardneſs of heart is, there is pride of heart, for theſe two go not aſunder, and the more proud, the more hard-hearted, and the more hard-hearted the more proud, and therefore if thy heart be humbled indeed, bruiſed for ſin, there will follow a very low and baſe eſtimation of our ſelves, to think more baſely and meanly of our ſelves than any man can do.

1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

The ſecond point is the praiſe and commendation of ſuch a ſacrifice: namely, that the

the prophet doth not only call it the ſacrifice of God, that is, moſt excellent, and ſuch as God loves and likes, but alſo he calls it ſacrifices; in the plural number, *The ſacrifices of God*; for it is not in vain that he ſpeaks in the plural number, and the meaning is this, to ſhew what a heart broken and bruiſed for ſins is inſtead of all other ſacrifices whatſoever; and let men offer what ſacrifice they will, never ſo many, coſtly or excellent, yet if this be wanting, it is but in vain, God eſteems not of it; one broken heart is more worth than a thouſand ſacrifices of great price.

Inſtruct.

THis may admoniſh every one to take heed that we do not offer nor preſent the Lord with any other ſacrifice but this which is inſtead of all, and more worth than a thouſand offered by hard-hearted ſinners, which are no better than Hypocrites and diſſemblers with God, which make a fair outward ſhew, and come like *Judas*, ſaying, *Hail, Maſter*, only to betray him, and undo their own ſouls, both in this life and in the world to come. For if a man offer many ſacrifices, pray much, preach much, hear much, receive the Sacrament often; yet if the heart be not broken, humbled and bruiſed, alas, all is in vain, God eſteems them as of no effect; we cannot pleaſe him without a broken and contrite ſpirit.

Secondly, wouldſt thou offer unto God a moſt precious ſacrifice, that might be inſtead of all the reſt, and make all the reſt acceptable? O then preſent him with this broken heart.

heart. The poor woman that caſt into the Treaſury but two mites, caſt in more than all the reſt, becauſe it came from a heart truly humbled; and ſo, if thou wouldſt have thy praying, preaching, hearing, &c. pleaſe God, then preſent the Lord with a broken heart, which is inſtead of all other ſacrifices, and makes them all acceptable; and without this all is abominable unto the Lord.

Thou wilt not deſpiſe.

Doct. 2. *God doth highly eſteem of a broken heart.* 2 *King.* 12. 19. *Luke* 19. *Iſa.* 66. *Eſ.* 57. 5.

THat is, thou doſt love, and like, and art well pleaſed with it, that is with a broken heart and contrite Spirit.

Hence we learn, that God doth well and highly eſteem of, and love that man or woman which is of a broken and contrite heart; like *Joſias*, whoſe heart was melted; when as the heart is broken with ſight of ſin, and ſenſe of Gods anger, and withal doth embrace Jeſus Chriſt for pardon and forgiveneſs.

Here is matter of endleſs comfort to poor diſtreſſed ſouls, whoſe hearts are wounded and bruiſed for their ſins, melt and mourn for them; feel the burden of them, and bewail them; thou art dear unto God, he loves thee, and likes thee, and hath reſpect unto thee, and he will comfort thee, and deliver thee. Look on *Joſias*, that godly King, on the poor publican, on *Mary Magdalene*, on the *Canaanitiſh* woman, and on every child of God, how the Lord hath refreſhed them in their diſtreſs.

Seeing the Lord doth not deſpiſe a broken and contrite ſpirit, a diſtreſſed ſoul and wounded conſcience, he will not break the bruiſed

bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax; then let no man or woman that is of a contrite spirit be out of heart, as though the Lord hated them, and regarded them not; no, no, let them rather know that the Lord loves them, and likes them, that they are dear unto him. It is a wonderful comfort to Gods poor children, Oh! they find and feel the heavy weight of sin, and groan under it, so as they think the Lord loves them not, but rather hates them; truly it is not so, the Lord loves them, and they are more dear unto him It is not voluntary Pilgrimage, not a bald head, nor, only, beating the breast will serve the turn; no, it must be sorrow and grief, a contrite and an humble spirit that the Lord doth accept of, and those are they which the Lord will not despise; as, *Isa.* 57. 13. God himself saith, *He will dwell in the humble and meek spirit, and will raise up that soul which is cast down,* &c. Ps. 33. 1.

VERSE XVIII. XIX.

Be favourable unto Sion for thy good pleasure: build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of righteousness, even the burnt-offering and oblation, then shall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

The second part of the Psalm, containing a Prayer for the Church.

HItherto we have heard of the first part of this worthy Psalm, wherein *David* hath put up sundry petitions and requests unto God, for the pardon of his sins, and turning away his fearful judgments.

Now

Now in these two last verses, *David* is mindful of the Church and people of God; and because he had by his sins not only endangered his own soul, but also laid open the Church and people of God to great misery, and done what lay in him (as he was a King and Judge of the Land) to draw the curse and Judgment of God upon them; therefore he doth humbly intreat the Lord to be merciful to his Church, and not to plague and punish them, as he might have done, both for his sins and disobedience.

These two verses contain in them two special points to be considered of by us.

First, the Request which *David* makes in behalf of the Church and People of God, *verse* 18.

Secondly, the reason taken from the vow and protestation which, *David* and the people make unto God, namely, to offer unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

In the Prayer be two Requests: first, he prays for mercy and favour to be shewed unto the Church of God.

Secondly, that the Lord would repair that breach which he had made by his sins.

Be favourable.

THat is, do well, bless, preserve and shew mercy to *Sion*. *Sion* signifies that beautiful Temple of *Jerusalem*, but here it is taken for the Church and people of God; as he if should say, O Lord, I do not only intreat thee that thou wouldst have mercy upon me, but I beseech thee shew mercy to thy whole Church and people, who were plagued for *Davids* sin; for you may read in

in the second Book of *Samuel*, when he saw the plague, he cried out, *O Lord, what have these sheep done? lay the punishment upon me, and upon my fathers house, rather than upon them, for they have done nothing.* Therefore he desires the Lord to be merciful unto them, that his Word may be preached, and his Name called upon: for I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have done, as much as lay in my power, to bring heavy judgments upon thy Church and people, if my sins be laid upon them. But Lord, let not thy Spouse be punished for my sins; *O be favourable unto Sion.*

Seeing *David* in time of misery, when the Church was in great danger of Gods Judgments, betakes himself to prayer, to intreat the Lord for grace and favour, we learn hence, That this is our chiefest refuge and shelter in the time of misery and affliction when the Church of God is in danger of any judgment or calamity, even to betake our selves to humble and earnest prayer. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* It is a greater blessing for a Kingdom to enjoy peace, for peace on earth makes it like to heaven. And of the *Israelites* it is reported, that they cried five times for peace unto the Lord in their distress. So in *Egypt* they cried unto the Lord; so they fasted and prayed when *Haman* had got the Kings Letter to put the *Jews* to death.

Doct. 1. *Prayer the chiefest refuge in the time of danger.*

Psal. 122. *Psal.* 60. *Psal.* 107. *Hest.* 1. 8. *Isa.* 64. 2 *Chr.* 32.

The like we may see in *Nehemiah*, *Nehem.* 1. 3. when he heard that the people returned from captivity, were still in misery, *Jerusalem* trodden down; he sate down and wept, he mourned, fasted, and prayed before the Lord

Lord God of heaven for the redreſs of thoſe evils. This appeareth likewiſe, *Pſal.* 137. 1. 2, 3. Where the Prophet layeth plainly down the miſerable eſtate of the Church under the *Babylonians*, and the afflictions of the Church conceived upon that diſtreſſes: *We ſate down and wept when we remembred thee, O Sion. If I forget thee* (O Jeruſalem.) *let my right hand forget her cunning; yea, if I prefer not thee,* Jeruſalem, *before my chiefeſt joy.*

And in the firſt of *Samuel* 4. 19, it is noted unto the everlaſting praiſe of the Wife of *Phineas*, that when the *Philiſtines* prevailed over the people of God, and one trouble came upon her on the neck of another, as the taking of the Ark, the fall of her father, the death of her husband, and the overthrow of the Hoſt, *&c.* yet above all, the report of taking the Ark of the Lord, it was a wound unto her ſoul, haſted her travel, and called her child *Ichabod*, that is *no glory*, or *the glory is departed from* Iſarel, *becauſe the Ark was taken.*

Uſe 1. Well, if the Lord ſhould afflict us, and ſhould threaten to deſtroy us, to remove the Goſpel, to take away his zealous and faithful Miniſters, to make the golden Belles of *Aaron* yeild no ſound; what are we to do? Namely this muſt be our refuge, we muſt fly unto God by true and hearty prayer, bewail our ſins, acknowledge and truly confeſs them to God, ply the Lord with prayers and tears, for the prayer of a righteous man is of *Jam.* 5. exceeding force. Now if the prayer of one righteous man be of that force and ſtrength, how much more available are the prayers of hun-

hundreds or thouſands, that are gathered together in one? One cord may eaſily be broken, but three-fold cord cannot eaſily be broken. *Elias* is called the chariot and horſmen of *Iſrael*, becauſe by faithful prayers which he had made unto God, he could do more for the defence of Gods holy Church, than an army of Souldiers.

Seeing the troubles of others muſt move pity in our ſelves, then woe unto them that are ſecure, that laugh when the Church weepeth, that live in bravery, when as the Church is in ſackcloth and aſhes, that feaſt, when the Church doth faſt. This was the practice of thoſe that lived in the time of *Eſay, ch.* 22. 12, 13, 15. *In that day did the Lord of hoſts call unto weeping and mourning, to baldneſs and girding with ſackcloth: and behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying of oxen, and killing of ſheep, eating fleſh, and drinking wine, for to morrow we ſhall dye.*

Hereunto accordeth that of the Prophet *Amos, Amos* 6. *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Sion, &c.* Where we ſee he pronounceth the woful eſtate and condition of thoſe who lived without regard of the judgments of God laid upon the Church. And certainly, the times wherein we live do call upon us to the practice of this heavenly and Chriſtian duty.

But much more are they condemned, that are ſo far from pitying the Churches troubles, that rather (without all natural affection, as if they were born of Wolves, or nouriſhed of Tygers) ſeek to cut the throat of the Church, add unto her afflictions, and make the burthen heavier, even of them that are

ready

ready to fall. This doth the Prophet speak of such, *Psal.* 96. 20. *They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and add unto the sorrow of them whom thou hast wounded.*

Doct. 4. *Prayer for the Church a Christian duty.*

In that the Prophet *David* doth not pray for himself alone, but is mindful of the whole Church and people of God, and therefore prays for them, that God would bless them, and defend them: Hence we do observe that it is the duty of every Christian man and woman, that be true members of the Church of God, not only to pray for themselves, but also to pray unceſſantly for the Church of God, that God would be favourable to his people, bless his children, and seek the welfare of Gods Church.

This we may see by the example of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. who prayed for the *Sodomites*, that they might be spared. This we may see in *Nehemiah*, *Nehem.* 1. 4. who mourned, fasted and prayed unto the God of Heaven, when he saw that the Church was in misery. And this affection, was in *David*, when he said. *Psal.* 137. *We sate down and wept when we remembred thee, O Sion.* And when the people desired *Samuel* to pray for them, 1 *Sam.* 12. 32. he said, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, and cease praying for you.* This *Paul* performed to the *Romans*, *Rom.* 1. 9, 10. *God is my witness (whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of his Son.) that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers.* We must pray at all times, and in all places; in the *Ægyptian* Palace with *Joseph*, in the *Babylonish* Court with *Isaiah*, in the Whales belly with *Jonas*, on the solitary Mount with

our Saviour, with *Peter* in prison, with *Paul* on the Sea shore, and with *Sylas* in the stocks. And therefore let us pray (my beloved) with unfeigned hearts, and with elevated spirits, that our devotions may amount the Heavens, to God the Father, for the peace of *Jerusalem*; and for our reward, it is here promised to those that do it, that they shall prosper.

So that we see here it hath been the practice of the Church and the people of God, to pray for the Church of God, and that indeed for sundry reasons.

First, it is Gods commandment, that we should pray for the Church of God; *Pray for the Church or peace of Jerusalem*, that is, for the good and flourishing estate of Gods Church and people. *Psal.* 12. 12.

Secondly, as it is Gods commandment, so it is for our own good, because we shall fare the better for the common good of Gods Church: *They shall prosper that love thee.*

Thirdly, we are or should be members of the Church of God, whereof Christ is the only head. Now then, members of one and the same body should procure the good one of another; and therefore if it still go ill with the Church of God, it cannot go well with us.

How did *Moses* plead with God sundry times for his Church and people? So *Nehemiah*, he fasted, and prayed for the Church in misery, and for the City of his Fathers, *Jerusalem*. *Exod.* 23.

And as it is the duty of all in general to pray, and procure the peace and prosperity

of

of Gods Church, and his people; so especially ought Kings and Magistrates; who are the Governors and Leaders of Gods people, and his Lieutenants upon Earth. Secondly, Ministers are bound to pray for Gods Church, and the peace of *Jerusalem*, which is the object of our prayers.

Now, there be three sorts of peace which we must pray for: First, the peace of conscience, Secondly, the peace of the World. Thirdly, the peace of Heaven. Now we may read in *Matthew*, how the Devils themselves have a peace; for when Christ came and did appear to them, they cryed out, *What have we to do with thee, O thou Jesus, art thou come to torment us before our time?* which shews they have some peace, though Devils. Then there is a second peace, which is wished by all people, which was denounced at our Saviours birth by the Angels, saying, *Peace on earth, and good will towards men.* But the chiefest peace that we must pray for, is the peace of Heaven, where is comfort and diversity of pleasure: God is the Author of peace, because of his Majesty and of his glory. Thirdly peace on earth, which is the preparation to happiness; and peace must be first obtained and had, before we can enter into glory: then peace and charity and hope will cease, but love and glory shall never have an end, but be permanent and of eternal durance; his peace, which *David* desires is for his own people, and for *Jerusalems* sake, that great City. *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, which is an act of charity: then it follows, *they shall prospe-*

the

that love it, there is the bleſſing promiſed to thoſe which pray for the Church of *Jeruſalem.*

For Sions ſake I will not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalems ſake I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof break forth as the light, and the ſalvation thereof as a burning lamp. I have ſet a watchman upon the walls, O Jeruſalem, Verſe 6. *which all the day and all night continually ſhall not ceaſe. Ye that are mindful of the Lord keep not ſilence.*

If this be the duty of all men, to labour to procure the welfare and happineſs of God's Church and people; then moſt woful is the eſtate of all thoſe that hinder the true worſhip and ſervice of God, when wicked men (like to bloody *Saul*) ſhall breath out threatning and ſlaughter to the Church of God, Well, we ſhall read in the Word of God, as alſo in the Acts and Monuments we ſhall ever find the end of Perſecutors to be exceeding horrible and very fearful; ſome of them were ſtricken down with preſent death, ſome dying deſperately, and deſpairing of Gods mercy, ſome run mad, and other the like fearful ends. Which might admoniſh all perſecuting Tyrants, and bloody enemies of the Church, to alter, and change their cruelties, and no more to perſecute the poor Church and Children of God; leſt they be plagued in like manner. *Vſe* 3. Act. 9. 1.

Be favourable.

THat is, ſo bleſs thy poor Spouſe, that in it thy Servants the holy Prophets, may ever preach thy ſacred Word, that thy Worſhip and Service may ſincerely be perform-

ed, and thy Name called upon; the number of the Elect may be increased, and many souls saved. Hence we learn, That it is the great favour and mercy of God to any Church or People, when the Word and Gospel of God is soundly and sincerely preached, and the Sacraments duly administred: when the people may with liberty and comfort come together to sanctifie Gods Sabbath, to call on the Lord in his Sanctuary, to worship the Lord in his Holy House.

Doct. 3. Liberty of preaching one of Gods favours.

And surely we do see here, what great cause we have to bless the holy Name of God in this Land, how gracious the Lord hath been unto us above all Nations that are round about us.

So on the contrary part, it is a great and grievous judgment of God to want faithful Ministers and holy servants of God; when God shall cause the golden Bells of *Aaron* to cease, it is a token of God's displeasure with any People, Town or Kingdom, then the Lord frowns upon them, and is exceeding angry with them, and then wo to that Nation or Countrey, when the Lord departs from them, when he shall take away their watchmen, when he shall deprive them of their faithful Ministers, when he shall take away his Word and Gospel. The Lord threatens this as the greatest of all judgments: then comes in sin, ignorance, prophaneness, impiety, idolatry, superstition, and all manner of sin, till the Lord come with his judgments to destroy them.

Amos 8. 11. Rev. 2.

Seeing it is so great a token of the Lords disfavour, of his anger, and displeasure a-

Use 1.

gainst

gainſt any Church or Kingdom, O then, let us repent of our ſins, let us intreat the Lord not to bring this judgment upon us, but rather to humble us by any other means, as it pleaſeth his Majeſty.

This condemns a plain dotage, and fooliſh dream of ignorant perſons: O (ſay ſome) it was never a good World ſince we had ſo much preaching; but in the time Popery, then all things were cheap. And ſo they gather by outward peace and tranquility, that God loved them, and liked of them. But we ſee here, howſoever many poor ſouls may deceive themſelves, it is a ſingular favour of God to people, when he gives them his Goſpel to be truly preached, and taught to them, when they may call upon him in publick and private, this is a ſpecial favour of God: but when this is wanting, *Where prophecyings fail: the people periſh.* For where the Word of God is not preached, and the people taught, there they are ignorant, blind and prophane, and all manner of iniquity abounds, and where ſin abounds, there the curſe of God muſt needs hang over the heads of that people. For where the Word is not preached, and the people taught, though they abound in all proſperity, yet it is not ſo great a favour as they think it to be, nay, it may be a judgment unto them; for what are they the better to have peace and plenty, eaſe and liberty, when they want the favour of the Almighty? for every benefit is not a bleſſing.

Uſe 2.

Prov. 29.

According to thy good pleasure.

Doct. 4. Faith must not rest upon others merits.

THese words contain the ground of his request, namely the endless mercy and favour of God in Jesus Christ, not any goodness or worthiness of their own, of *David*, or the people; but he builds his faith and petition on God's meer mercy in Christ.

Hence we learn that we must build our faith, not upon any goodness, desert, or worthiness of our own, but upon the alone mercy and good pleasure of God, *Dan.* 9. He doth confess, it is true, that they dare not appear in their own name or worthiness, but only in the mercy of God in Christ: *To us belongs shame and confusion of face; but, Lord, for thy tender mercies sake hear us.*

Dan. 4.

When the Church of God was in great affliction, they acknowledg it the Lord's great mercy they were not consumed for their sins, *Because his compassions faill not.* So then let us know that we must lay this ground of all our prayers, even on God's endless mercy in Christ, not our own worthiness.

Lam. 3. 22.

Use 1. This condemns all such pride as the Papists are guilty of, when they do lean so much upon their own merits, worthiness, and deserts, and think God should hear them, and help them for the same; yea, they make Saints and Angels Mediators: whereas we must rely only on God's mercy in Christ for all good things.

Use 2. Seeing *David* doth build his faith and prayer upon God's mercy alone, without any respect to his own worthiness, or goodness of the people, we learn, in all our prayers to rely wholly on God's mercy, and not

not think that we are worthy to be heard for our own unworthineſs or deſerts: no, no, let us confeſs and ſay, *Not unto us, O Lord not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory*: for we are not worthy of the leaſt favour.

Many of us when we are at our prayers in the Church, are led away with a world of fancies, and mingle our devotions with the cares and thoughts of the world, and inſtead of lifting up our hearts and hands to God, to beg mercy and forgiveneſs for our ſins, we lift up our eyes to ſee what new faſhions we can eſpy: and if not ſo, then we hold up our heads on high, thereby we ſhew our pride; or otherwiſe, on our elbows, are ſleeping in our pews or ſeats: but let me tell thoſe that ſleep in the Houſe of God, in the time of Divine Service or Sermon, they are dead to God already, and the Preacher (may be ſuppoſed to be) preaching their Funeral Sermons. O let us take heed we be not overtaken with any of theſe infirmities, or if we are, or have been let us ſtrive earneſtly and ſpeedily to forſake them, leſt we be ſuddenly taken away by the hand of Death, as was *Herod* and *Ananias*, &c. Therefore let us watch with the Lord one hour by and prayer, eſpecially upon his own day, and his own houſe; for prayer is an antidote againſt all the poyſonous darts and inticements of Satan, it elevates our thoughts and meditations on better things then ever we can here enjoy, it takes away our affections from the vain and momentary delights of this wicked world, and by the grace of God may be a means to ſtrengthen us againſt

Note.

Exhort.

gainſt the ſtrongeſt aſſaults of Satan, to his utter ruine of us. For if Satan but once perceive that we begin to have but a thought of prayer, he then ſteals away preſently, and dares not approach to attempt us. I can aſſure you prayer is powerful, profitable, and delectable; powerful it is, for it is the key of Gods Cabinet, which opens the bleſſings of God to man, it is a cure for all diſeaſes, and remedy againſt all deſpairs; for in the depth of all ſorrows, nothing is ſo comfortable or profitable as prayer, ſteers and keeps the heart in the right way from many other inconveniences, and evil imaginations, for our bodies are the cages of unclean birds, when indeed they ought to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt: nor are the beſt of our actions but unjuſt, and our devotions only eloquence of words, mingled with worldly cares and diſtracted thoughts. O let us remember this, that our conſciences cannot die with us, nor yet die within us, but will ariſe and open it ſelf at laſt, though our ſins were never ſo ſecretly and cloſely kept or hid from the eyes of man, yet the All-ſeeing Eye of God, by our own conſciences, ſhall witneſs againſt us. Therefore let us pray for a heart of repentance now in the time of grace, and under the Goſpel. It was the ſaying of that old Practitioner St. *Paul*, *Pray continually*, (ſaith he) and it ſhould be our dayly prayer, Lord ſo ſtrengthen us, that our prayers may be effectual before thee. To pray twice a day every man ought to do, this he may do, more he can do, leſs he cannot do. Let us therefore every morning

ing ſacrifice our firſt born unto God, that is, our firſt thoughts, and in the evening our laſt thoughts: our prayers do circumvent Satans incurſions. It is prayer which pleaſes God, and our prayers are as ſo many cords which bind us to the horns of the Altar. O how many men can ſwear by their faith which never pray by their faith; and when they go to bed and riſe again, never acknowledge Gods mercy to be renewed unto them, but like a dog ſhake their ears and fall to drinking, and eating, and ſwearing. Oh that men were as full of getting grace, as many men are deſirous to get wealth, but moſt men in theſe our ſinful and latter days pray for riches, ſeek after lands, purſue honour and pleaſure, projecting and beating their brains how to increaſe riches, which are the fading bloſſoms of the earth; whilſt in the mean time (like the rich man in the Goſpel) which had all things at his command, his barns full, one of corn, and the other of ſin: but obſerve what became of him for all his riches, he went to bed, but he never awaked again, for that very night his Soul was taken from him. None of Gods children we ever read of did ſo, their prayers were otherwiſe, it coſt them many ſighs and tears to have the knowledge of God, and of their ſins, thereby to ſubdue the corruptions of their bodies, and to have dominion over the World, and the intiſements thereof. This was *Davids* prayer and ſupplication to God, to pray him in his good time and pleaſure to build up the walls of *Jeruſalem*, that is, the breaches and di-

visions of the Church, which was torn and rent by reason of his sins. Prayer overcomes, but prayer was never overcome. *Hezekiah*'s prayer shall prevail, *Elias* his desires granted, the *Ninivites* repentance caused showers of mercy, instead of vials of wrath: this makes us to have strength and power, as further when we see prayer stops the mouth of *Lyons*, as it did when *Daniel* was flung into their Den: it is as *Sampson*'s lock, which pulls the whole house upon the *Philistims* heads; it can make a prison a Palace, as it did to *Joseph*; it can open the Prison door, as it did to *Peter*; it can divide the Sea, and make it like a wall on every side, as it did to the children of *Israel*. Prayer, I say, is a messenger of God, it drives away the enemy of our souls; nay, it will subdue our bodily enemies, and mollifie their hard hearts. Prayer doth remove the poison of sin from our souls, and it brings all true joy and comfort to our hearts; it is better than either Oyl or Wine, though with abundance of increase. Therefore, I say, he that will rejoyce continually, let him pray without ceasing, that is, as often as he hath opportunity, or, at least, twice a day; for prayer will be no hinderance to any man no more than a man that is in a journey, and doth alight to refresh himself, or to mend what is amiss. If thou answerest and sayest, thou shalt lose a customer, I will tell thee, thou shalt get grace and favour of God; if thou hindrest thy self in the sale of thy goods and trade, thou shalt get knowledge, and with *Mary* in the Gospel chuse

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the better part, and receive the greater glory, *&c.*

O let us ſpare ſome time in the morning to pray to our God, and let us entertain with cheerfulneſs ſuch a cuſtom into our hearts; we have not ſo great a task impoſed upon us, as to take all the pains for our bodies, and none for our ſouls; unhappy ſhall he be for ever, who prefers his Mammon before his God. He that to keep his body ſhall ſell his ſoul, ſhall, when too late, repent ſo unhappy a departure. How fearful a change ſhall he make, who to gain an applauſe on Earth, ſhall loſe a reward in Heaven; let us not deceive our ſelves, only he ſhall receive a crown in Heaven, who hath been a faithful ſervant on Earth. Who ſo doth truly endeavour to be of the Church Militant, ſhall undoubtedly have a part in the Church triumphant: if we ſhall follow the works of grace here, we ſhall never go without the works of glory hereafter, and ſo I come now to the ſecond part of the verſe; which is *David*'s earneſt requeſt and prayer to God, *And build up the walls of* Jeruſalem, *&c.*

And build up the walls of Jeruſalem.

The Second part of the verſe.

THis is the ſecond part of the verſe, wherein he intreats the Lord not to hinder the building or erecting of his Temple for his ſake, but rather to inlarge and make up that ſame breach which he had broken down by his foul and bloody ſins. As if he ſhould ſay, O Lord I have by my ſins done what lies in my power to hinder thy Church, and to pluck down the wall of thy protecti-

on, yea, to lay them open to the Sword of the enemy, and to all thy judgments. But I pray thee (O Lord) that thou wouldst in mercy make up that breach, *Build up the Walls of Jeruſalem*, the City wherein thy Temple is built, and thy Name is called upon, the ſeat of thy Worſhip and Service.

Doct. 5. Sins of the Magiſtrate provoke Gods anger very highly.

Doth *David* confeſs, that by his ſin of adultery and murther he had done what lay in his power, even to pull down the Walls of Gods Church and People, even to lay them open to Gods judgments, plagues and puniſhments? Then hence we learn, That the ſins of the Prince and Magiſtrates, and chief Ruler, as Kings, Queens, *&c.* they do caſt the whole People and Kingdom into great danger, and do provoke Gods anger againſt them, and open the flood-gates of Gods vengeance: for their ſins be as their perſons be, and a ſmall ſin in a great Magiſtrate, in a Miniſter, in a King, is a great ſpot, and a foul blemiſh. The *Ægyptians* were all wicked by reaſon of *Pharaohs* tranſgreſſion. So we ſee that when *Achan* ſinned, though no great man, yet it brought the curſe of God upon all the People. So in the days of *Saul*, *Ahab*, *Joram*, and the like; when ſuch Kings lived in impiety, idolatry, and did ſo perſecute Gods People and Prophets, we ſee in the Word how God did plague both them and their People.

The reaſon why the ſins of the King do inwrap the people in that judgment of God, is this; becauſe look how the King is, ſo (for the moſt part) are the people; if he be

be an Idolater, ſo are they : for look how the King is affected, ſo be moſt of his Subjects.

Seeing this is ſo, that the ſin of the Prince, the chief Magiſtrate is ſo great a means to pull down Gods judgments upon the whole People, and wrap them up in the like judgment, as we ſee in *David*, who for his ſin of numbering the People, ſeventy thouſand were ſlain ; we learn hence that it is a great mercy of God to have ſuch a King as walks with God, is careful to honour God, and to live in his fear, for then he ſhall not only procure a bleſſing upon himſelf, but on all his People and Subjects : and the contrary is a fearful judgment of God upon a Land, when he gives them wicked Kings and Princes.

Uſe 1.

2 Sam. 24.

Iſ. 3. 1, 2.

We learn by the example of *David*, that thoſe who have by their ſins hindered the good eſtate of Gods Church and People, whether King, Prince, Magiſtrate or Miniſter, if they do truly repent, they will be as careful to build up the Walls of Gods Church again, to pray for it, to procure the good of it. *Saul* did perſecute the Church, he ſought the ruine of it, and to pluck out the throat of poor Chriſtians, and to ſuck their blood ; but after he was wounded and humbled, he became a Preacher of the word, and ſought to build as faſt as ever he pulled down before.

Doct. 6. A penitent will ſeek to build up that which before he had pulled down Acts 9. 2 Cor. 12. 14.

Well then, haſt thou heretofore hated Gods children, perſecuted them, reproached them, ſought to hinder the good of Gods Church and People, and the Goſpel of

Uſe 2.

of Christ? If thou dost ever repent, thou must shew it in this, in loving God's children, furthering God's truth, upholding Christ's Kingdom, and glorifying his Gospel; else thou dost never soundly repent. Hast thou by evil examples, by a sinful life, by negligence of holy duties, by lewd advice and wicked counsel, drawn and allured others to sin, and to bring God's judgments upon them? if thou dost truly and earnestly repent, thou shalt bewail this sin, and pray for them whom thou hast thus wronged.

Doct. 7. A man cannot pray till he repent.

Again, out of the whole Verse mark this lesson and instruction well, namely, that *David*, who before durst hardly approach unto God, and open his mouth in prayer, for himself, yet now upon his repentance and reconciliation with God, is bold to pray for others, yea, to pray for the whole Church of God. Hence we learn, that as long as a poor mortal man lives in sin without pardon and true repentance, he cannot pray for himself, he cannot, and dares not open his mouth unto God to pray for himself, much less for others; but when he shall truly repent, turn to God, after he is reconciled to God in Christ, then he can come with much boldness unto God, and pray for himself, and others also, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*; shewing, that till he was converted, he could not help or strengthen his brethren.

Seeing before men and women be converted and do repent, and be at peace with God, it is impossible they should pray for others,

others, or do any good : This ſhould firſt admoniſh all Miniſters of the Word of God to repent, and to be at peace with God, for otherwiſe it is impoſſible for them to pray for others, or do any good thing to pleaſe God. And though they teach and preach the Word, yet they ſin in it, and pleaſe not God, and cannot perform one ſpecial part of their Office, namely to pray for God's People effectually.

VERSE XIX.

Then ſhalt thou accept the Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs, even the Burnt-Offering and Oblation; then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

IN this Verſe is contained the fruit of God's mercy and favour both to *David* and the People, and the fruit is double.

Firſt, in regard of God, that he ſhall then accept, and be well pleaſed with their ſacrifices.

Secondly, In regard of *David*, and the People, they vow and covenant with the Lord to offer praiſe and thanks unto God for ſo great a favour and bleſſing.

Then ſhalt thou accept the Sacrifice.

AS if he ſhould ſay, O Lord, when thou ſhalt thus be favourable to thy poor Spouſe the Church, and forgive my hainous offences, and make good that breach which is broken by my filthy ſins : then ſhall thy mercy be ſeen, in that thou ſhalt accept of our

our ſacrifices, and ſuch duties of thy ſervice and worſhip as we ſhall perform unto thee.

This Doctrine is this: When a People or Kingdom, do repent and turn to God for mercy, amend their lives, ſo as God is reconciled unto them, then doth he accept of their ſacrifices, oblations, prayers, *&c.* being done in faith and repentance: but ſo long as they live in ſin without repentance, the Lord being not reconciled unto them, he eſteems not of that they do.

Uſe 1. Seeing the Lord doth then accept of a People when they repent, and be reconciled unto God, amend their ſinful lives: Let us learn from this Doctrine, that if we deſire to have the Goſpel continued, our peace prolonged, and the Service and Worſhip of God to be eſtabliſhed, there is no other way but this, to ſeek to God by true repentance, to get our ſins pardoned, and to be at peace with the Almighty.

O then repent and amend, for if you will not repent and amend your works and ways, the Lord our God will not accept of us, nor regard us; *Jer.* 7. yea, he will remove our *Candleſtick* from us, *Rev.* 2. that our golden days ſhall have an end, and our mirth ſhall be turned into mourning, and light into darkneſs.

The Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs.

THat is, ſuch Sacrifices as are done by the preſcript Rule of the Holy Word ſuch as God requires, and in that right and lawful manner which he commands in his Holy Word. Now the ſacrifice of a troubled

bled ſpirit, is the incenſe of tears which God did accept at *David* hands: for they that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy, as *David* did; for he found more comfort after his confeſſion then he did before.

Hence we ſee, what be thoſe ſacrifices which the Lord accepteth of in his worſhip and ſervice, namely, *the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs*, that is, lawful Sacrifices, allowed and warranted by the Word of God, and ſuch as being lawful, are performed in a right and holy manner, according to the preſcript rules of Gods Word: but as for the ſacrifices which are not warranted by the Word of God, nor done in a lawful and holy manner, according to the rules of Gods Word, the Lord careth not for them.

Doct. 1. What be thoſe ſacrifices that God doth accept of.

Now it may be asked, how *David* can ſay, *The Lord accepteth ſacrifices*, ſeeing in the former verſe he ſaid, God doth deſire no ſacrifice? Now he here affirmeth, that the Lord ſhall accept the ſacrifice of righteouſneſs.

I anſwer, That ſuch ſacrifices as are offered with opinion of merit, as the *Jews* did, who thought by offering a Beaſt, that God was ſatisfied, and ſo they might be bold to live in ſin, and ſuch as they offered (without faith and repentance) the Lord eſteemed not of them. No let every true penitent ſinner, like *David*, offer the ſacrifice of Prayer and Thankſgiving, and of a contrite heart, which is more than all outward ſacrifices: for thoſe who do truly repent and become good Chriſtians, are termed or called Gods Manuſcripts, wherein he writes his

his Laws, and by them relates his will to others, that is a true ſacrifice to have a penitent heart. No incenſe will God accept of, but our true and penitential tears, no ſacrifice but prayers, put up to him in faith; no Mediator, but his Son, and our only Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Son of his Love, and the Lamb of his Boſom. God doth not look ſo much at our actions, as at our affections, for God ſaith, *Son give me thy heart*: he deſires nothing of thee for all thoſe gifts he hath and doth beſtow upon thee from day to day but thy ſelf: therefore if thou wilt give God the beſt and trueſt ſacrifice, thou muſt preſent thy ſelf for that ſacrifice, there is nothing better for a ſacrifice to preſent God withal, then our heart, nothing better pleaſing to him than that: God commands the firſt-born to be offered to him as a ſacrifice, and if we will do that, we muſt then give him our heart, for that is the firſt thing that lives within us; other outward ſacrifice God is not pleaſed to accept, becauſe it is corrupt, and God is immortal; and God being immortal, ſhall we preſent him with things that are mortal and defiled? Yea, it muſt be the heart, and a new heart which muſt be created by repentance; and that muſt come by our earneſt prayer, and a fervent deſire to hear the Word of God preached: for out of the heart comes grace and goodneſs, and out of the body comes only natural infirmities: therefore we muſt keep our hearts with all care and diligence, for that ſacrifice which is performed without the heart, is but a con-

counterfeit and a ceremonious ſacrifice, being aſſured, that *the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not deſpiſe.*

But here he ſaith, that God will accept, and like of ſuch as are offered in a holy manner, according to the rule of God's Word: that is, when ſacrifices commanded of God are offered in a holy manner, as in faith, repentance, and obedience, and not to merit any thing, but as exerciſes of faith and repentance, and types of Chriſt Jeſus, to lead them unto him, and as teſtimonies of their thankfulneſs to God, and ſo far forth as they ſerved for the furtherance of Gods glory, and the edification of his Church.

The Doctrine then is clear, That it is not left to man to ordain and appoint the ſervice and worſhip of God, to put in what he will, or to put out at his pleaſure; but if we will have our ſacrifice and worſhip of God acceptable and truly to pleaſe God, we muſt give the Lord leave to commend and preſcribe what he thinketh good, and we muſt not dare to add any thing of our own, nor to take away his worſhip and ſervice, *Deut.* 12. 8, 32. we are forbidden to add or take away any thing from his Law, in which he preſcribeth the rules of his Worſhip, *Deut.* 32. 17. When the *Jews* worſhipped God after their own fantaſie, the Lord ſaith, they worſhip not God, but Devils; and the Lord holds it a vain thing to teach his worſhip, and fear by the precepts of man. So then, all ſuch ſacrifices of

of righteouſneſs be the Worſhip ; of God, which he warranted by his Word ; and nothing may go under the name of his Service and Worſhip, but that he preſcribes in his Word.

This condemns the greateſt part of the Worſhip of God amongſt the Papiſts, their ſeven Sacraments, their adoration of Images, and their praying to Saints, their abominable Maſs, their voluntary poverty, and perpetual Chaſtity ; for which they can ſhew no word of warrant in all the Scriptures ; and therefore it is no right ſacrifice, and ought to be abhorred.

This meeteth juſt with the common Chriſtians, all men (though never ſo vile) will confeſs God muſt be adored ; but when it is demanded what is the ſacrifice that God likes of, then they offer what they liſt themſelves: Some imagine they ſerve God well with their good meaning, ſome, by their good doings, and by their good dealings, and civil honeſt life, ſo long as they think no harm, nor ſay none, they think they ſerve God as well as the beſt: Some think; if they rehearſe and number over the ten Commandments and the Creed for prayers, they ſerve God highly : but poor ſouls, is this all you do in Gods Service? Is here all the Sacrifice you offer him ? It is a cold and ſlender Sacrifice. Let our Sacrifices which we offer God be firſt exact and pure; ſecondly, conſtant. Firſt, pure without hypocriſie, and undefiled without being mingled with earthly cares; and our hearts likewiſe free from envy and malice. Secondly,

condly, constant we must be in our Sacrifices, not serve God by fits and starts, or when we are at leisure; this is no true Sacrifice, we ought to do it exactly, and with holiness and righteousness, as it becomes Christians. In the old Law they offered the Sacrifice of Burnt-Offerings, a Lamb without spot or blemish: something was still offered as an Oblation to pacifie Gods wrath: now if we cannot offer that Sacrifice of a Lamb without spot or blemish, which is meant our souls, then let us bring two Turtle-Doves with us, that is, our Love and Obedience; for the Turtle-Doves are so loving to each other, that they are never asunder: if we cannot offer that Sacrifice, let us bring a pair of young Pigeons, that is, our Sacrifice of a contrite heart, sighing, and sorrowing for our sins; for Pigeons they are always mourning and sorrowing, If we cannot pray, let us hold up our hands; if we cannot weep for our sins, let us sigh out our Prayers; if we cannot sigh, let us labour to humble our selves; and if we can but do this, then will God accept our Sacrifice, and hear our Petition, and send us our desires, even blessings upon blessings, both outward and inward; outward in our temporal estates, and inward by spiritual and heavenly thoughts to our Souls; and for the time to come, let us double our care and diligence, and take time while we have it, and take the Balm of *Gilead* while we have strength to apply it; for no man can work when Night comes; when death hath seized us, there is no repentance,

pentance to be looked for, no ſacrifice to be offered.

Then ſhall they offer Calves upon thine altar.

IN this part of the Verſe is ſhewed what is the fruit of Gods mercy in *David* and the People, namely this, that they will promiſe and covenant with God for their deliverance, to offer unto God praiſe and thankſgiving.

Doct. 3. Solemn Vows a Chriſtians duty.

Hence we learn, that it is our duty to bind our ſelves by ſolemn covenant and promiſe to God, that if he will deliver, us from miſery, trouble, affliction, judgment, puniſhment and from unreaſonable men, that then we will offer him praiſe and thankſgiving, call upon him, ſerve and worſhip him all our days. *Jacob* vowed, that if the Lord would be with him in his journey, to keep him, and defend him in it, he would then build a Houſe to God, and worſhip there. *Joſias* made a covenant unto the Lord, and all the people with him, to ſerve the Lord, who did deliver him from the curſe of the Law. *David* did often uſe this, to bind himſelf by a covenant to ſerve the Lord, *Pſal.* 116. he payed his vows he made to God. So *Jeptha*, *Judg.* 11. Vowed unto the Lord, that he would offer ſacrifice unto the Lord who gave him victory; and though the matter of his vow was unlawful, yet his vow to honour God was the fruit of faith.

Gen. 28. 2. 1 Cor. 3. 3 Pſal. 116.

Uſe 2.

Well then, let us make our Uſe of this Doctrine; and ſeeing it is not only lawful, but alſo our duty, even for to make ſolemn covenants unto God, that if he will be favourable unto *Sion*, and build up the Walls of

of *Jeruſalem*; that if he ſhall deliver us from any danger, judgments, afflictions whatſoever, that he will be careful to honour God, to be thankful unto his Divine Majeſty. Let us then make this Covenant with the Lord our God, let us vow obedience and newneſs of life, and let us ſay with *David*, *I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments.* So let us even take a ſolemn vow of our own ſelves, that by the grace of Almighty God we will have more care to laud God, to honour him, to ſerve him, to call upon him, and accordingly let us be mindful to perform the ſame; for the Lord will require all the vows we make unto him. Pſal. 119.

This may ſtir us up to remember what a ſolemn vow and promiſe we have made in Baptiſm, to forſake the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, that we will forſake the Devil, ſin, and Satan, ſo as we will not follow nor be led by them; yea, that we will manfully fight under the Banner of Chriſt Jeſus, and become his faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our lives end.

This is the Covenant which we have made every one of us in our Baptiſm and entrance into the houſe of the Lord, before the preſence of God and his holy Angels, before the Congregation and Church of God: But (alas) we break it every day, and have neither care nor conſcience to keep it. Well, let us know, the Lord will one day require our Covenants and Vows which we have made unto him: He looketh that we ſhould

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as well keep them as make them. Well, then, wouldſt thou be loath to break thy Vow, Covenant or Promiſe made to an honeſt man, eſpecially being in thine own power to keep it, and ſuch a promiſe as the keeping whereof may procure thee much peace, liberty, and freedom? I know you would: O then, let us be as careful to keep promſie with God, and to renounce the world, the Devil our Enemy, and our ſinful luſts, and let us be like *David*, to croſs the Devils ſnares and temptations; and let our bodies be no more the receptacles of ſin and tranſgreſſion, which is the cauſe why our ſouls cannot hear the ſweet harmony of the bleſſed Angels, which if we labour ſo to do, we ſhall bring much honour to the Lord Almighty, and everlaſting good to our our Souls.

Doct. 3. A publick thankſgiving after delvierance required.

And laſt of all we learn hence, that as it is the duty of every Chriſtian man and woman to pray both publick and private for the ſafety and good eſtate of the Church; ſo likewiſe it is our duty publickly to render thanks unto the Lord for deliverance beſtowed upon the ſame. We may not be like to the nine Lepers, who have wide mouths to beg, but neither heart nor mouth to give thanks for benefits received. It hath ever been the care and religious cuſtom of God's Church and People, after great and notable deliverances from viſible and common judgments, to render hearty and earneſt thanks to God in ſolemn and publick manner, *Gen.* 8, when *Noah* and his Sons and Family were newly delivered from periſhing

riſhing in the Flood, the firſt thing he did, he builded an Altar, offered ſacrifice, and called on the name of the Lord. So *Moſes* and the children of *Iſrael*, after their deliverance out of *Ægypt*, when they were ſafe and their enemies drowned, did devoutly and publickly ſing praiſe and thanks unto the Lord. *Deborah* and *Barak* did the like *Judg.* 5. And the *Jews* being delivered from *Hamans* treaſon, *Heſt.* 10. they rejoyce and keep a ſolemn day to ſing praiſe unto God.

Well, let us bring this Doctrine to our ſelves: we are by God's bleſſing the true Church and people of God, profeſſing the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt truly, hating all ſuperſtition and idolatry, and for this cauſe we cannot want many enemies. The Papiſts, the moſt ſubtil, cruel, and malitious enemy of God's Church, have often ſet upon us, aſſaulting us, ſought to have invaded our King and Countrey, as in Eighty Eight, by ſundry treaſons to murther our late Queen of famous and bleſſed memory, and to deſtroy our gracious King and Queen and all his Royal poſterity. But among the reſt, and above all the reſt, none comparable to that laſt treaſon, which was moſt cloſe and in ſubtilty wrought, a long time in hatching, moſt bloody and deviliſh, moſt barbarous and ſavage, threatning and ſeeking to deſtroy and root out King, Council, Spiritual and Temporal Magiſtrates, aiming at the utter ſubverſion of our *Engliſh* Nation, both Church and Common-wealth.

And ſurely, if we conſider well of it, I do not

not ſee in all the Bible the like deliverance ſo wonderful and admirable.

1. Being ſo long a time in hatching and contriving, with ſuch ſecrecy and concealment.

2. Being under the ground, in Hell, as it were, in a place under the earth, deſiring darkneſs more than light, becauſe the deed was evil.

3. Being brought ſo near the execution of it, and never known nor ſuſpected before.

4. Being diſcover'd ſo ſtrangely, even by one of the Traitors themſelves, one of the chief Actors in that Tragedy.

5. Being ſo general, ſo fearful, and ſo monſtrous, as it ſhould not have been to the deſtruction of one or two, but of the chief of the whole Land, King, Queen, Prince, Nobles, Judges, Biſhops, in a word, the Flower of the Kingdom; the want of any one whereof were a blemiſh to a State, and would bring a ruine to a Kingdom.

Now do as *Ahaſuerus* did *Heſt. 6.* 1. cauſe the Records to be read, and Chronicles to be ſearched, Antient and Modern, Divine or Prophane, amongſt the Turks or Pagans; yea, if Hell keep any Records, ſearch there; and ſee if you can pattern this Conſpiracy or matchleſs danger.

But there is no counſel againſt the Lord; man's wiſdom is fooliſhneſs unto him, his greateſt ſtrength but weakneſs, his life but a breath, and his honour but a blaſt.

So then we ſee we have as great cauſe to render thanks unto the Lord as any People or

or Nation under Heaven. The fifth day of *November* is a day to be remembred, and never to be forgotten; a glad and joyful day, and we ought every one in publick and private to rouſe and ſtir up our hearts in thankſgiving unto the Lord; for it was the Lords doing and it is marvellous in our eyes. Such a Plot, and ſuch a deliverance it was that the like was never heard of. We may read in the Scripture of ſundry Deliverances, yet not of ſuch a one as this: ſurely this horrible Plot was hatched in Hell. We may likewiſe read, that God did ſend down fire from Heaven, to deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; but of a fire out of the Earth to burn and blow up a whole State, I never read of; This ſurely muſt needs be from Hell. This day was ſuch a day, that I hope will never be forgotten by our poſterity: for if it be, as the Papiſts do labour and ſtudy exceedingly for to do, perſwading the younger ſort that are under their tuition that there was no ſuch Plot or Conſpiracy, and that no ſuch thing was ever intended by any of their Religion, only a trick (as they ſay) put upon a company of younger Brothers, to ſacrifice ſome malitious and envious humours which were their enemies; ſo that I ſay, if this days ſolemnity were not enacted by the High Court of Parliament, and the whole Body of the Kingdom, that it ſhould be obſerved and kept holy, they ſhould as they do ſtill, labour to bring to paſs that in a few years ſpace it might be forgotten: which if we neglect to remember, to give God thanks, as I have

ſaid, by our prayers and Alms, the very Fowls in the Air will one day witneſs againſt us for our ungrateful and unthankful generation. The Papiſts boaſt and brag much of Saint *Peter* for their Guider and Director, which if they did but imitate and follow him, they would not do as they do, but be of his mind, for he was humble and meek: but now they have left Saint *Peter*, and practiſe *Salt-Peter*, as they would have done, witneſs the fifth of *November*, and that likewiſe of Eighty Eight. Is this to follow Saint *Peters* Religion and direction? they may well brag of Saint *Peter's* Chair, but whether they can of his Charity; judge ye my Brethren, yea, or no: for their Religion is Rebellion, to kill Princes, to ſtab and poiſon Kings and Queens; their Treaties with other Nations are only treacheries, faunings, and diſſemblings; their matches will over-match us: if we do not look to them, better than with Match and Gunpowder, which (as I ſay) was laid as this day forty five years to have blown the whole Power and Strength of this Kingdom up into the Air like Atoms and Flies in the Sun; take but notice if ever you read in Chronicle or Hiſtory of the Butchery of Kings, the depoſing of Princes, the Martyrdom of Religious Proteſtants, but ſtill a Papiſt and a Jeſuit had a hand in the plotting and deviſing of it; then judg whether their Religion be grounded upon God's Word, or from any Sacred Writ, yea, or no, or whether they have any Warrant for this their diſſembling and diſguiſing their Religion

ligion with a Cloak of Knavery and Envy, as they do being aſſembled together in one place. It is the day which the Lord made for the glory of his Name, let us rejoyce and be glad in it. For God brought and delivered us out of the *Ægyptian* Bondage upon this day; nay, our Church and Country too from a day of Darkneſs and Idolatry, to a day of Light, and Sun-ſhine of the Goſpel. Some of us had not been living at this day, if their bondage and plot had effected: God this day ſecured us from other Maſters, that we might ſerve him; and for this ought not we to render thanks and praiſes? yea, or elſe let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths.

Now it is not enough to keep that day as an idle holy-day, to reſt from labour, and work, to ring Bells, and make Bone-fires, to give our ſelves to eating and drinking, and ſwill, to ſport and paſtime, for this is no honour unto God.

1. But firſt, our thankfulneſs muſt appear in a moſt reverend and graceful commemoration and this remembrance of this ſo great and wonderful a deliverance, we muſt call it to mind, think of the greatneſs of it; we muſt declare it to our children and poſterity, that when they ſhall ask the reaſon of it, we may cauſe and call upon them to be thankful: for the child that is unborn is bound to laud God for it, *Exod.* 12. 9 O taſte, ſaith St. *Gregory*, the Word of Life with the Palate of thy Heart, and remember

how good and gracious the Lord hath been unto us and our Nation, and what deliverance he had done for us ſinful men; what ſhall we then repay the Lord for his benefits? but only return him by a living ſacrifice praiſe and thankſgiving. And therefore let us daily aſcend Heaven by our meditations, leſt at the laſt day we aſcend the contrary.

Secondly, We muſt ſing Pſalms of Praiſe and Thankſgiving unto God in token of thankfulneſs, and that publickly in the Church and Congregation of God's People.

Thirdly, we muſt come together into God's Houſe, to hear his Word, and to call upon his Name, and that is a ſpecial part of our unfeigned thankfulneſs. O how many men in theſe our dangerous and ſinful times live, and do nothing on the Sabbath day, ſpending it after their own deſires! how many in this Kingdom on this day make their Chambers their Chappels, their Beds their Pew, their ſnorting their Devotion, their Cook their Preacher, their Belly their God, new Cloaths their Law and delight, and ſpend their time only in inventing what will pleaſe their humours. O I fear, my beloved, we have many of theſe ſins laid to our charge in theſe our evil days, which God in his mercy, cauſe every one to be heartily ſorry for them. We have even ſurfeited with the good things of the land, as peace, plenty, and many other bleſſings we have enjoyed theſe fifty years.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, we muſt teſtifie our thankfulneſs in moſt hearty and dutiful obedience, which is the greateſt and beſt ſacrifice, 1 *Sam.* 15. and if this be wanting, then all we do is nothing worth, *Iſa* 29. 13. So that for our general deliverance, there ſhould be a general thankſgiving in a general reformation of the Church and Commonwealth of our hearts and ſinful lives; otherwiſe indeed we are unthankful, if ſtill we live in ſin and rebellion; then (notwithſtanding our keeping a day, ringing of Bells, ſport and play) if there follow no reformation of our lives we may juſtly fear a more dreadful judgment, if not utter ruine and deſolation to follow. Now alas, where is this uſe of God's mercy and our deliverance? where do the people reform their lives, reform their ways, grow more religious, conſcionable and careful to hear, read, pray in their families? It is but a wonder of nine days, men make little or no uſe of it, but to talk of it, and ſpeak of it. O let us not be ſo careleſs of our own good, but uſe our beſt endeavour for the amendment of our lives. Which that all eſtates and degrees of men may do, the Lord grant for his mercies ſake, *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a FAMILY.

Lord teach us to pray, that we may call upon thy Name: prepare our hearts to ſeek thee, and open thou thy merciful ears to hear us.

O Eternal and ever-living Lord God, Creator and continual preſerver of all things both in Heaven and in Earth; by whoſe gracious providence as we were at the firſt wonderfully and fearfully made, ſo we are no leſs preſerved and kept unto this preſent. We here, the workmanſhip of thine own hands, deſire to humble both Soul and Body before thee. And now, Lord, we being here in thy preſence, cannot but acknowledge and confeſs againſt our ſelves, our own unworthineſs to come before thee, to call upon thee, or to perform even the leaſt duty that ſhall concern thy worſhip or glory. Our hearts, alas, are no better than ſinks of ſin, and a maſs of pollution and uncleanneſs; and who can make that clean that is taken out of any unclean thing? The thoughts and imaginations of the ſame muſt needs be evil continually, and we unto every good work prove reprobates. Yet, O Lord, ſeeing thou haſt commanded us to call upon thee, and haſt mer-

mercifully promiſed to be preſent with thy children, to hear their prayers, and to grant their requeſts which they put up in faith unto thee: O Lord this doth give us boldneſs to come before thee, and in confidence of thy goodneſs that thou wilt make good the ſame thy promiſe unto us at this time, we here offer up unto thee this morning ſacrifice of prayer and thankſgiving, humbly acknowledging and confeſſing from the bottom of our hearts our manifold tranſgreſſions and offences, which we have continually multiplyed againſt thee, in thought, word, and deed, from the beginning of our days, untothis preſent time. We acknowledge, O Lord, that our original corruption in the which we were at the firſt conceived and born, and from which there hath ſprung forth the moſt bitter and unſavoury fruit of ſin, apoſtacy, and rebellion, to the great diſhonour of thy Name, the wounding of our poor ſouls and conſciences, and the evil examples of others amongſt whom we have lived; by the which, O God, we confeſs, that we have juſtly deſerved that thy wrath and indignation ſhould be poured out upon us, both in this life and in the life to come.

And therefore, O God, we come not here before thee in our own worthineſs; but in the worthineſs and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt; beſeeching thy gracious goodneſs for his ſake to forgive all our offences, our viſible ſins, our ſecret ſins, our ſins of infirmity, our preſumptuous ſins, againſt know-

knowledge, againſt Conſcience, againſt Thee, againſt our Brethren, in the time of our younger years, or in the days of our knowledge, as we muſt needs confeſs, that in many things we have ſinned all. We pray thee, O God, for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, to forgive the ſame unto us, and perſwade our ſouls and conſciences more and more; that thou art at peace with us, and that all our ſins are done away in the blood of thy Son; and grant O God, by the aſſiſtance and direction, of the ſame thy Spirit, that with more freedom of mind and liberty of will, we may ſerve thee in righteouſneſs and true holineſs unto the end of our days. And, good Lord, begin not only repentance and true converſion in us, but of thy great mercy perfect the ſame. O lead us forward more and more towards perfection, increaſe in us our ſaving knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Chriſt, our faith in thy promiſes, our repentance from dead works, our fear of thy holy Name, our hatred of all our ſins, and our love of thy truth. Frame our weak hearts (good Lord) more and more into obedience unto thy holy and heavenly will, and teach us in all things to reſign our wills unto thy holy will, and in time of affliction, as in time of proſperity to depend upon thee; that we may not look too much upon our own weakneſs, but may ſtay our ſelves by thy power and promiſes.

And, good Lord, comfort our ſorrowful hearts and dejected ſouls, that find dayly ſuch

ſuch cauſe and humiliation in our ſelves, doing dayly thoſe things which we ſhould not, and leaving undone thoſe good things thou commandeſt. O then let us be truly humbled for the ſame, and for thy mercies ſake give us better affections unto goodneſs, and power and ability to do that good thou commandeſt and requireſt at our hands: that ſeeking in all good things to honour thee, and to extol thy name while we live here, we may at the laſt behold thy face in glory.

And now, Lord, together with our prayers we are bold to add theſe praiſes to thy great Name, for the manifold favours and bleſſings, the which from time to time thou haſt beſtowed upon us for this life, eſpecially for a better life. We thank thee for that it hath pleaſed thee of thy gracious goodneſs to elect and chooſe us to ſalvation before the world was; for calling us by thy word in time, for juſtfying us by thy Son Chriſt, and for giving us a certain expectation of a better Life when this is ended: As alſo for the happy means of our ſalvation, thy Sabbaths, Word, and Sacraments. Oh, it is thy great goodneſs, O Lord, that thou haſt not deprived us of them all, in as much as we have from time to time walked ſo unworthy of thy love. O lay not to our charge our great unthankfulneſs, that we have not brought forth more fruit of thy Word in our lives, but give us, we pray thee, that for the time to come we may make more right ſteps to thy Kingdom. And we magnifie thy Name, O Lord, for

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all the temporal bleſſings which thou haſt in mercy beſtowed upon us, our health, peace, food, rayment, and for all the comforts of this life: O Lord, give us a right uſe of them, that we may not abuſe them unto Licentiouſneſs, but ſtir us dayly by them to devote our ſelves unto thee and thy ſervice. We acknowledge thy goodneſs towards us the night that now is paſt, freeing us from many imminent dangers both of ſoul and body, and giving us ſweet and comfortable reſt. We beſeech thee to be with us this day, and all the days of our lives, and teach us to walk as children of the light, that thy Name may be glorified by us, others may take good example, and we our ſelves enjoy the peace of a good conſcience, ſo as at the laſt we may come to reign with thee in glory.

Bleſs the Churches and Kingdoms wherein we live with the continuance of our peace and true Religion; be gracious unto the King and Queen, and all the Royal Progeny, Bleſs all others in Authority, the Miniſters of thy Word, our afflicted Brethren, in Body, or Mind, or both; let it pleaſe thee O Lord, to ſtay them and ſupport them in time of their diſtreſs, and give unto them a happy iſſue out of the ſame, as it ſhall ſeem good unto thee. And fit us for harder times whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe thee to bring the ſame upon us; and keep us, Lord, in thoſe days by thy mighty power. And thus have we commend our ſuits unto thee, humbly praying thee to pardon our wants

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now at this time in the performance of this duty: and thou that art privy to our wants better than we our selves are, we pray thee to take notice of them, and minister unto us a gracious supply in thy own due time, even for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose Name we conclude these our weak and imperfect prayers, in that perfect form of Prayer which he himself hath further taught us, saying, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

Evening

Evening Prayer for a FAMILY.

O Lord, Prepare our hearts to Prayer.

O Eternal God, and our moſt loving and merciful Father in Jeſus Chriſt, and in Chriſt our Father: it is thy own commandment that we ſhould call upon thy Name, and it is thy gracious and merciful promiſe, that where two or three are gathered together in thy Name, there thou wilt be preſent among them. We thy poor and unworthy ſervants, duſt and aſhes, yet the workmanſhip of thy own hands, are now bold to come before thee to offer up unto thee this Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Thankſgiving. And now, O Lord, being here before thee, we cannot but acknowledg and confeſs, even from the bottom of our hearts againſt our ſelves, our own unworthineſs, that we are grievous ſinners, conceived in ſin, and born in iniquity, and whereof we have brought forth moſt vile fruits in our lives, to the great diſhonour of thy Name, the utter diſmaying of our own conſciences, and the evil example of our Brethren; by the which we have deſerved likewiſe thy wrath and heavy indignation ſhould be poured upon us, both in this

this life and that which is to come, in ſuch ſort as no treaſure in Heaven and Earth is able to reconcile us again to thy Majeſty, but only thy Son Jeſus Chriſt. We intreat thee therefore, O Lord, to be merciful unto us; and as we acknowledge our ſins unto thee, ſo be thou faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs. Waſh us throughly from our wickedneſs, and cleanſe us from our ſins: for we acknowledge, O Lord, that againſt thee we have ſinned and done our evils in thy ſight. Thou haſt been a guide unto all our ways, who alone art the ſearcher of the heart and the trier of the reins: to thee therefore, O Lord, do we come to crave the pardon of our ſins, both for the guilt and puniſhment of the ſame, that ſo they may not draw down upon us our deſerved judgment. And we intreat thee likewiſe, as to pardon our ſins that are paſt in our lives, ſo to arm and ſtrengthen us againſt ſin for the time to come. Oh! we have woful experience in our ſelves of the weakneſs of our Nature, how ready we are to fall from thee, and cannot keep ſo conſtant a watch over our ways, nor over our own hearts, but ſtill are ready to ſtart aſide. O Lord, direct us aright in the paths of thy Commandments; let thy good Spirit lead us forth into all truth, and theſe hearts of ours that are by nature ſo fraught with ſin and wickedneſs, we pray thee alter and change, and bring into ſubjection dayly every thought, and whatſoever thing elſe is in us, into faithful obedience unto Chriſt: let us,

find dayly more and more the power of Christ's death mortyfying sin in us, and the efficacy of his Resurrection, raising us dayly out of the grave of sin unto newness of Life; and give us, Lord, that we may dedicate our selves, our souls and bodies to be lively, holy, and acceptable sacrifices unto thee. Let thy love shewed unto us, constrain us to love thee again, who first loved us. Thou, O Lord, hast made us, and not we our selves, thou hast made us not beasts, but men and women, yea, after thine own Image; thou didst preserve us in our Mothers womb, and didst nourish us when we did hang upon the breast: thou hast still in mercy provided for us, and heaped upon us many blessings, which orhers want and stand in need of. O Lord grant us a right use of all thy mercies, especially for that thou hast let us live in such a happy season of thy Gospel in a time of peace and prosperity, wherein thou dost by thy Word continually call at the door of our hearts, and laboures for our Conversion, O Lord, we can never sufficiently admire thy goodness herein, and the rather, because we have from time to time walked so unworthy of thy love. Forgive us, O Lord, our unthankfulness herein, and let us now walk as children of the light. O it is too much, Lord, that we have spent the time that is last past according to the lusts of the flesh, give us grace that we may spend that short time that yet remaineth according to thy will; set before our eyes the shortness of our lives, the day of death is sure in the end, unsure in the time, that we

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may be fully prepared for that ſecond coming of our Saviour unto Judgment. And now in the time of our proſperity, Lord teach us to think of the time of adverſity, and in the time of our health, let us remember the time of ſickneſs, and the hour of death, which ſhall come upon all fleſh. O let us be mindful of our latter end, let us number our days aright, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom, and ever mind that reckoning and account which one day we ſhall give unto thee. Make us while we live here to be humble-minded toward our brethren, that we be lowly in our own eyes, that we get contented hearts, pure affections, chaſte minds, and wiſe behaviours, and all other gifts of thine own Spirit, that may adorn us in thy ſight, and may add unto the credit of the truth we profeſs.

And, good Lord, we pray thee accept of our thanſgiving unto thy Majeſty for all thy mercies and bleſſings from time to time beſtowed upon us for this life, and for a better, We praiſe the for our election, vocation, juſtification, ſanctification, continual preſervation, and the aſſurance that thou haſt given us of a better life when this is ended: as alſo for all temporal bleſſings, health, wealth, peace, and proſperity; for thy goodneſs extended toward us for this day paſt, that thou haſt gone in and out before us, and freed us from many dangers of ſoul and body, and brought us with peace and comfort unto the beginning of this night. Lord, watch over us by thy Spirit and preſence, give us a holy and ſanctified uſe of our reſt

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and sleep, and fit us for the duties of the next day; especially, O Lord, fit us for that day which shall never give place to night, and grant unto us all good things that thou in thy wisdom knowest more expedient to give than we to ask, even for Jesus Christ's sake: to whom with thee, O Father, together with the blessed Spirit, we acknowledge to be due, and desire to give all honour, and praise, and glory, both now, and for ever, *Amen.*

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FINIS.